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EDITORIAL

PLUTONIUM COVER-UP?

A small worry no bigger than the baseball once thought to represent the size of an A-bomb's explosive core appeared on the nuclear horizon in the aftermath of the shuttle Challenger's explosion. As reported here three weeks ago, journalist Karl Grossman stumbled upon NASA's plans to launch the next vehicle with a payload containing 46.7 pounds of plutonium-238, the most toxic substance in this universe. Now that little worry is growing, to cloud the immediate future of space exploration.

As it turns out, two shuttle missions were to carry "piggyback" rockets to be launched from space: Galileo would be aimed at the Jovian moons, Ulysses at the sun. Both would use plutonium-pellet-powered thermoelectric generators, which would be placed next to Centaur liquid-fuel rockets. If anything happened to the shuttle or the Centaur, the plutonium would be broadcast to do its deadly damage.

Representative Edward Markey, who chairs a House subcommittee on energy matters, got wind of the risk probabilities—one in thirty-five for a mission explosion—and began investigating. So far, the agencies involved have been stalling, if not stonewalling. The Energy Department admits that a Galileo explosion could release about 57,000 curies of plutonium radiation—theoretically enough to give 5 billion people lung or bone cancer, under worst-case conditions. But the department won't declassify a study explaining what those conditions are. One official said the study was being kept secret because it discussed the potential worldwide distribution of plutonium particles and their effect on unnamed countries. Markey is pressing for declassification, which some officials say may come by the end of the month. Whether it does or not, Congress should conduct a full-scale investigation.

SPAIN'S NATO VOTE
Gabriel Jackson

THE SAUDIS BRACE FOR HARD TIMES
Stanley Reed

G.O.P. SPLIT: YUPPIES AND EVANGELICALS
Ronald Brownstein

THE POEMS OF LORINE NIEDECKER
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'SHOAH' AND THE DEATH MACHINE
Anson Rabinbach

LETTER FROM EUROPE

HANDICAPPING THE FRENCH ELECTIONS

DANIEL SINGER

Paris

All the ingredients are apparently there, but somehow the mayonnaise does not bind. François Mitterrand, with his usual tactical skill, is both the umpire of the upcoming National Assembly elections and the skipper of the Socialist side. The three leaders of the rightist coalition—the corpulent Raymond Barre, with his falsetto voice; Jacques Chirac, too obviously ambitious, with his Mussolini-like chin; and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the affected aging actor hankering after past glory—are already so preoccupied with the presidential poll, to come in 1988 at the latest, that it is difficult to tell whether they are fighting one another or the left. Spending on political advertising has broken all records, and posters showing smiling candidates plaster the country. The French now know the latest Madison Avenue imperative: instead of "cheese" they say "wistiti sex." Yet for all this wisdom and expense, there has been no passion in this campaign.

Some commentators blame President Mitterrand for the lack of passion. There is no tension, they argue, because there is so little at stake. In past elections, when the left was in opposition, it seemed to offer a radical alternative. Now, after five years of Mitterrand, that alternative seems to have vanished. The choice is obviously between two shades of opinion on how best to manage a capitalist society. Serge July, the editor of *Libération*, a trendy newspaper, sort of a daily *Village Voice*, has just published a book describing Mitterrand as a reluctant normalizer, whose great merit is that he has fitted France into the traditional Western mold. It is strange

(*Continued on Page 306*)

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LETTERS.

A PYRRHIC VICTORY PERHAPS

Morgantown, W. Va.

Nicolaus Mills is mistaken in calling the ending of the Massey strike a victory for the miners ("A Victory for Miners' Rights," Feb. 15). Just the opposite is true. Several Massey mines have been closed or sold off. The United Mine Workers is more centralized and more dependent on the courts. Callbacks to work are moving slowly and are being used to exclude the more militant workers.

The article neglects to mention the creativity of the rank and file during the strike and also overlooks the suspicion of radicals, so strong in the U.M.W. headquarters these days. The selective strike brought with it a lot of posturing by the union leaders, but in the end when the air cleared we were left with a weak union led by men quite willing to centralize union affairs and curb dramatic action by the rank and file. To get from the early, more optimistic, days of his administration to the debacle of today, president Richard Trumka had to rewrite history and placate a restless membership.

Dependence on the courts is not a good thing for any union. It is especially bad for the U.M.W. in southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky. The courts there are unlikely to side with the union without strong pressure from beyond the region. No such pressure is growing and it likely would be resented if it was brought to bear. Already the courts in Mingo County, West Virginia, are near the bursting point. It is conceivable that they might side with the U.M.W. but at the expense of those union members arrested during the strike.

Let's remember an ironic side of U.M.W. history. The "conservative" administration of Sam Church called what amounted to political job actions on several occasions. The situation then seemed as desperate as it does now and the odds of winning just as small. The "liberal" Trumka administration has yet to do anything dramatic to reverse our losses. Reliance on the courts, boycotts and selective strikes are no fit substitutes for an aroused membership.

Robert St. Aubyn

MILLS REPLIES

New York City

In an era of union givebacks the United Mine Workers signed a 1984 agreement with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association that gave their membership a 10.25 percent raise. In the Massey strike the U.M.W. beat back an antiunion assault that would have allowed the company to cancel seniority rights and ultimately undermine any future B.C.O.A. contract. By any criterion such achievements constitute a victory. Massey has closed some of its mines, but in an industry that is depressed as a result of national and international conditions, such a step is hardly surprising. What is significant is that when Massey sold off mines, the buyers were companies with a union work force. No company wanted Massey's troubles.

Unfortunately, courts in the Tug River Valley have not been friendly to the U.M.W., but on appeal the union did very well during the Massey strike. This fall the U.M.W.'s contention that it was improperly fined $200,000 was upheld by the West Virginia Supreme Court. There is every reason to believe that Massey's attempts to deny work to strikers it regards as troublemakers will also be overturned in court. (In its most recent legal skirmish with Massey, the union won an important victory on February 25, when U.S. District Court Judge Dennis Knapp ordered Massey to arbitrate a grievance the company claimed it did not have to process.) In that case Massey will have to pay its workers for the time they were illegally kept off the job. Meanwhile, the rest of the U.M.W. strikers can go back to work.

A union that has waged a fifteen-month strike is hardly being timid because it prefers to carry on the last phase of a complex battle under circumstances in which most of its members are being paid their regular salary. The U.M.W. won this strike in no small measure because its members were able to withstand a series of brutal assaults against them. It does not have to prove its toughness by undergoing more suffering.

Nicolaus Mills

MISTREATED READERS

Mill Valley, Calif.

I wish you would reserve the letters page for ordinary readers and put the protests of those who feel misquoted, misconstrued or otherwise mistreated by your columnists in a separate section. I usually enjoy letters to the editor, but I am bored by most of the recent lengthy correspondence in *The Nation*. I would rather hear a neutral observer comment on some of the disputes, especially those involving Alexander Cockburn.

Elizabeth M. Cuthbertson

YO, LEFTISTS, LISTEN UP

New York City

In his February 22 article, "Why the Democrats Need Labor," Harold Meyerson mentions the New Directions conference with no reference to who is sponsoring the conference or how people can obtain further information. The conference, representing a broad coalition of the democratic left, is being convened by Michael Harrington. It is scheduled for May 2 through 4 at the Washington Convention Center. For more information, call (212) 962-0390, or write New Directions, 15 Dutch Street, Suite 500, New York, NY 10038-3705.

Jo-Ann Mort
New Directions coordinator

MEASURING BARBARITY

Chicago

I must take exception to a comment in the January 25 lead editorial, "Enemy of the Week," in which Syria is said to display "the same quantum of barbarism and altruism as its neighbors."

As readers of *The Nation* are likely aware, in the past decade the Syrian Army has killed probably one-third of a million Syrians, Palestinians and Lebanese, and even the odd Israeli. With the exception of the Iraq-Iran war, this does not compare with the actions of other countries in the area.

Neil Rest

BASTIONS OF LIBERALISM

Washington

I take strong exception to Hans Koning's observation in the February 8 issue ["At Home Abroad"]. *The New York Times* is not pervasively right wing. Off the top of my head come two exceptions in its pages: the "60-Minute Gourmet" and the daily crossword puzzle. (I must admit, though, that the Sunday crossword has some *contra* tendencies.)

Robert Bové

'PROJECT CENSORED'

Rohnert Park, Calif.

Nation readers are invited to participate in the tenth annual effort of Project Censored by nominating one of "The Ten Best Censored Stories of 1985."

The issue should be current and of national or international social significance. It may have received no media coverage at all, appeared in the back pages of a newspaper or in a small-circulation magazine.

To nominate a "censored" story of 1985, readers should send a copy of the story, or information about it, including the source and date, to Dr. Carl Jensen, Project Censored, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA 94928.

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space. Our policy is to publish as many letters as space permits, but inevitably a backlog develops, so please bear with us.

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EDITORIALS.

As Everyone Knows

The transformation of rumor into fact in politics is as ineffable a process as the transubstantiation of biscuits into flesh is in religion. Don't think it doesn't happen all the time: one day's whispers and wisecracks in Washington become, by some mysterious alchemy, next week's stories in the newspapers, all triple-sourced and richly attributed. During the rumor stage, reporters and political gadflies buzz with inside information conveyed in formulaic phrases such as "It's common knowledge," or "Everyone knows." For example, in the early 1960s it was common knowledge in Washington that an interagency group in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations was assigned the task of developing ways to assassinate Fidel Castro. Everybody knew about it, but the story was not published until the next decade, when it became legitimate to let the public in on unsavory truths. The rumor had always been fact; only the climate for acceptance had changed.

So much innocence has been lost over the past several years that the American people are willing to believe almost anything about politics, but it is still difficult to transform "common knowledge" into publishable fact. Everybody in the know knew that NASA was feeling pressure to launch the Challenger shuttle on January 28, after many delays, so that President Reagan could cite teacher Christa

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McAuliffe's achievement in his State of the Union speech scheduled for the same night, but it has taken more than a month for the Washington fact factory to bring the obvious to light. Senator Ernest Hollings charged last week in a television interview that the White House wanted the shuttle launch for public relations reasons; White House spokesman Larry Speakes denied the charge vigorously. At last the rumor had become a fact, even if a deniable one.

Much more insidious is the lid that Washington keeps on the facts of President Reagan's campaign to harass the Nicaraguan revolution off the stage of history. It's common knowledge that the *contras* are a bunch of thieves and assassins, with no significant popular support and certainly no democratic objectives. Everyone knows that the White House couldn't care less about freedom in Nicaragua but is dedicated to the elimination of all independent governments and radical social developments in its sphere of influence. Somehow the simple but devastating truth is suppressed, or so qualified as to weaken its power.

In the debate over Reagan's request for $100 million to aid the *contras* in their malign efforts, the various participants so far have not been above taking the President and his advisers at their word. The press repeats his description of the *contras* as the "democratic forces" and politicians agree that the purpose of the *contra* operation is merely to get the Sandinistas to negotiate with their legitimate opposition. Many critics seem willing to let Reagan get away with his comparison of the bloody *contras* to the nonviolent insurgents of Corazon Aquino's "people power" in Manila.

As the vote on the aid package nears, there are reports (not yet common knowledge) that many Democrats and some Republicans will be able to deny the Administration its request for the so-called lethal assistance portion. It would help if those opposed got up in Congress or stood in front of the television cameras and told the facts of Reagan's interventionist campaign that everybody in Washington already knows: The Administration has been waging war against Nicaragua for five years. The *contras*' tactics are terrorism, sabotage and wanton violence against the civilian population. They have as much claim on democratic legitimacy as a mugger has on our moral conscience. And that's a fact.

Cave-in at ABC

No one should have been surprised when ABC News apologized to the White House for letting Soviet spokesman Vladimir Posner critique President Reagan's February 26 speech on national defense. ABC News has been caving in to everyone these days. Its president, Roone Arledge, reportedly canceled a *20/20* segment on Marilyn Monroe because it contained gossip about the Kennedy brothers' affairs with the actress. After the showing of *The Day After* in 1983, the network appeased the pronuke people by presenting a discussion by a balancing panel of "experts." Then, to placate Accuracy in Media, the right-wing monitor, ABC's entertainment division announced a sixteen-hour miniseries titled *Topeka, Kansas . . . USSR*, depicting life in these United States under Soviet occupation. When the Russians complained and threatened to restrict ABC's privileges in Moscow, the network decided to reconsider. And when AIM and other groups objected to ABC's craven surrender to Soviet pressure, it promptly caved in to *them*, announcing that the series, now known as *Amerika* and running four hours shorter, was back on the drawing board.

Then came the Posner affair. After the Russian's instant analysis was broadcast, White House propaganda chief Patrick Buchanan shot off a letter to Arledge, stating that he was "astonished" that "a trained propagandist for the Soviet Union" had been allowed to impugn the veracity of the President of the United States. ABC again begged forgiveness for its sinful ways, saying it was a "production error" to let Posner "push on at too great a length without an opposing voice to point out the errors and the inconsistencies in what he said."

The interesting question is not why ABC apologized — *mea culpa* seems to have become the network's corporate motto—but why the White House complained in the first place. It did not do so because, like Representative Bob Dornan, it thinks Posner is a "betraying little Jew." Although such anti-Semitism is undoubtedly the product of the forces of intolerance unleashed by Reagan's courtship of the fundamentalist right, it had little to do with Buchanan's complaint. What upset the White House was that Posner belies the stereotype of the Soviet spokesperson. He speaks with a slight Brooklyn accent rather than a broad Russian one, and exudes the blow-dried sincerity of your average American news anchor. In other words, he isn't a Slavic-looking *apparatchik* who's not to be taken seriously. Instead of being received as propaganda, his message could be mistaken by viewers as an alternative and judged on its merits.

That possibility is repugnant to the White House and, by extension, to news organizations that court its favor. As Herbert I. Schiller of the University of California, San Diego, points out, the major broadcasting companies like to present themselves as being open and pluralistic. Yet on the rare occasions when they permit a genuinely alternative view to be heard, it is shoehorned into a two-minute segment surrounded by commercials and other trivia, ripped out of its historical and social context and then subjected to the ritualistic purgation by an "opposing voice" representing the majority or official view. This fragmentation technique is a major means of enforcing ideological conformity on the news media.

In that case, Posner should qualify for equal time under the spirit of the fairness doctrine. Why should he have only seven minutes to expound the thinking of the Soviet government, when the President had twenty-three to tell the American people that Star Wars represents the greatest hope for peace since pacifism? Could it be that the threat presented by Posner is that millions of viewers might think about what he had to say?

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Spain's NATO Vote

Barcelona

On March 12, Spaniards will vote on whether to remain in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Socialist government of Prime Minister Felipe González, which is calling the referendum in a belated fulfillment of a campaign promise made before the fall 1982 elections, is asking voters to approve continued membership in the alliance under three conditions: that Spain not be integrated into the alliance's military structure, that no nuclear weapons be stationed on its territory and that the U.S. military presence in the country be reduced.

The Socialists owed their 1982 victory in considerable measure to their anti-NATO stand, and they offered the referendum as a way of pulling Spain out of the alliance, which the centrist government of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo had joined earlier that year. But once in power, the party leaders did a complete turnabout [see Adrian Shubert, "Bringing Spain Back Into Europe," *The Nation*, December 21, 1985]. They now defend their change of heart by arguing that since Spain is a member of the Common Market, it has a moral obligation to contribute to the defense of its partners. They also say that their original objection—that NATO membership would infringe on Spanish sovereignty—will be met by the three conditions, which they confidently promise to negotiate. As for the argument made by many leftists that NATO and its Eastern counterpart, the Warsaw Pact, are obstacles to disarmament and the reduction of tensions between the superpowers, they say that Spain can work more effectively for détente inside the alliance.

A more important, and less publicized, reason for the Socialists' switch is that party technocrats believe modernization of the Spanish economy depends on increased investment in high technology, and that requires access to military technology and capital which only NATO countries can offer. Moreover, Spain's growing arms industry, which had sales in 1984 of $707 million, up from $39 million in 1975, would be endangered by a "noncooperative" attitude toward the other NATO nations. Finally, the military is waxing nostalgic for the imperial past, when Spain was a power in Africa and the Mediterranean, and the government hopes to dilute that sentiment by involving the officers in planning the defense of the alliance's southern flank.

The party leadership's pro-NATO strategy has evoked a volley of criticism from the opposition. In January the government asked parliament for approval to hold the referendum. Because it has a majority, the approval was granted, but the government was unable to achieve the broad consensus it had also sought. In the debate, centrist and conservative parties either mocked or angrily denounced the Socialists' newfound concern for the "national interest." There were numerous jokes about joining a military alliance without being integrated into its structure. Many pro-NATO deputies are opposed to reducing the U.S. military presence in Spain, or at least to making an issue of it, and that view has some popular support. On the left the Communists, much of the Socialist Party rank and file and the country's numerous pacifist and antinuclear groups accused the government of betrayal.

Recent opinion polls show that a majority of Spaniards don't believe that the government can persuade the United States to give up its important air bases near Madrid, Saragossa and Seville, and its naval installation on the Atlantic at Rota. About half of those polled said it would be impossible for the country to remain outside NATO's military structure, and nearly all of the respondents were skeptical about Spain's remaining nuclear-free. Thus, the three conditions have undermined the government's credibility and distracted attention from the main question: the desirability of Spain's remaining in NATO. On March 12 there could be a large number of abstentions: on the left by voters who are disgusted with the government's position but are reluctant to vote against it, and on the right by those who oppose the conditions and seek to deny the government a real majority.

Whatever the outcome of the referendum, however, there will be little change in foreign policy. If there are so many abstentions that the vote is considered meaningless, the Socialists will continue Spain's membership on the alliance's myriad committees, including the Defense Planning and Military committees. If the referendum is defeated by a substantial margin, González may not honor the results. Even if he does, Spain must give a year's notice of its intention to resign from the organization, and parliamentary elections must be held before October. Whoever wins those elections—right, center or Socialists—will be able to reaffirm NATO membership by a majority vote in the parliament. In the unlikely event that Spain withdraws from the treaty organization, its bilateral security pacts with the United States and other NATO members will remain in effect, so its defense policies will be virtually unchanged.

The referendum will have the greatest impact on domestic policies. Spain's peaceful transition to a parliamentary monarchy after thirty-nine years of dictatorship produced a fundamental political transformation, but it left the economic and social power structure untouched. From 1975, when Franco died, to 1982 the country was governed by men who became honest advocates of democracy but who had held important posts in the Franco regime and had close professional, economic and family ties to the dictatorial elite.

The Socialist victory gave Spain its first leftist government

(*Continued on Page 308*)

DANTO A WINNER

Arthur C. Danto has received this year's LIU/George Polk Award for criticism. Long Island University, which sponsors the award, cited Danto's "clear, perceptive and sensitive essays" on art in this magazine, adding, "In a milieu in which turbidity is often confused with profundity, Mr. Danto's clarity of expression stands out."

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Cory, Cory Hallelujah

An advisory from the Associated Press to subscribing newspaper editors, sent out on the wires at 10:16 E.S.T. on February 25, provides the essential clue to coverage of the eviction of Marcos in the Philippines: "Editors: Informatively, we are recasting the U.S.-Philippines story to focus on the American role in his resignation and questions about the ultimate destination of Marcos, his family and associates."

In the end I felt rather sorry for Ferdinand. Nearly a quarter-century's worth of faithful service to U.S. imperialism, host to congressional junkets without number, military boondoggles beyond counting, and how does it all end up? The quickly engineered defection of Ramos and Enrile, two of his most devoted henchmen; a transfer of power given play-by-play coverage on network TV; and a final crescendo of self-congratulation by U.S. politicians and pundits for their strenuous struggle for democracy in the Philippines.

It's not so hard to imagine what will happen next, once the honeymoon fades. Either Corazon Aquino will attempt to institute genuine reforms, which will naturally be unacceptable to the United States and to the local power structure; or she will rapidly succumb to the limitations of her role, Marcos's dilemmas will become hers (she is, after all, part of the elite), and she, the generals and the U.S. advisers will turn their attention to the New People's Army. A historical precedent worth pondering is the systematic massacre of the Indonesian left in the mid-1960s by right-wing Indonesian generals working in collusion with the C.I.A., which resulted, as one C.I.A. study put it, in one of the "ghastliest. . . . bloodlettings of current times." If I were among the leaders of the N.P.A. I would think about the Indonesian episode long and hard.

Footnote: There's a good account of the Indonesian horror by Peter Dale Scott in *Pacific Affairs* for Summer 1985.

The Leiken Affair

Hardly was Marcos on the plane for Hawaii before Senator Richard Lugar, flushed with the excitement of his outing to Manila, began calling for "free elections" in Nicaragua, having plainly concluded that since the results of the elections held there in November 1984 were not to his liking, fresh ones had better be held, at gunpoint if necessary. This is Gunboat Democracy, where you exclude all undesirables by terror or by bribes, sponsor the appointment of a candidate suitable to U.S. interests and call the results a triumph for Jeffersonian principles.

There's a nice illustration of these techniques in the work of Robert Leiken, whose distortions of truth, first in *The New Republic* and more recently in *The New York Review of Books* for March 13, were the subject of extended commentary in this column on December 28/January 4. Leiken has now contributed a second article to *The New York Review*, covering an enormous amount of space and adorned with respectful photographs of Calero, Pastora and Bermúdez. Eager though *The New York Review* is to print Leiken, its editors have given less space to those who complain about his manhandling of reality. On January 6, Marvin Corrales, once of the youth section of Nicaragua's Democratic Conservative Party, sent them the following letter:

> A copy of a *New York Review of Books* article on Nicaragua by Robert Leiken has circulated among opposition parties here in Managua. I do not think I have ever seen such a dishonest report.
>
> I will confine myself to what Mr. Leiken claims were Sandinista intimidation tactics to force the Democratic Conservative Party to participate in the November 1984 Nicaraguan elections. Mr. Leiken writes that "on October 28 [1984], the Democratic Conservatives were also on the verge of voting to withdraw [from the elections]. Several dozen young Sandinistas broke up the party's convention." A moment later he refers to this as "the coercion of the registered opposition."
>
> This, like so much of Mr. Leiken's extraordinary version of events, is entirely false. I was the coordinating secretary of the Democratic Conservative Party Youth in October 1984. I personally organized the demonstration to which Mr. Leiken refers. (There were 800 members of the Democratic Conservative Youth at the meeting, Mr. Leiken, not "several dozen"—it is obvious that you were never there. We would have had even more if several hundred members from Chinandega and other outlying cities had been able to get transportation.) Our demonstration was organized with the support of Dr. Clemente Guido, our party's national organization secretary and its presidential candidate in the elections. The Sandinistas had nothing to do with it.
>
> Mr. Leiken carefully avoids telling his readers the reason for the demonstration: it was an effort by the Youth to stay in the elections after revelations that several influential party members had accepted bribes from the U.S. Embassy to try to pull the party out.
>
> All this was adequately reported in the London *Financial Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* at the time, but the American reporters whom Mr. Leiken is so fond of quoting on the elections (one of whom, Julia Preston of *The Boston Globe*, described us in a "straight" news story as "rabble rousers") never printed any of it. For the benefit of Americans who do not regularly follow the British press, here is what happened.
>
> A few days before the elections the Political Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Managua met with several high-ranking party members and offered them substantial amounts of money, $300,000 to the party plus $50,000 for each of them personally as commissions, if they could get the Democratic Conservative Party to abstain.
>
> Three of those present went along with the deal, but the party treasurer did not and instead quietly reported the maneuver to party presidential candidate Guido. We then, with his approval, organized the demonstration to which Mr. Leiken refers, bursting into the hall shouting "Elections! Elections!"
>
> Had we not gone into the meeting the embassy plan might well have succeeded. Our intervention, which showed the depth of the Party Youth's commitment to the elections, was decisive, however, and the following day the party leadership met again and voted to continue the electoral campaign, something Mr. Leiken also conspicuously fails to mention. The three members who agreed to the bribes quit the party

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after being denounced for corruption and betrayal.

We wanted to participate in the elections because we want a strong political opposition to the Sandinistas that is not a handmaiden of the U.S. Embassy. We consider ourselves a party of the center, a party of peace, between the two extremes of the Sandinistas and the U.S.-controlled *contras*. Our party has no foreign affiliation, unlike most parties in Nicaragua, and we are nobody's tool. There are those who are not happy with that, both at the embassy and among the Sandinistas, as was shown by recent government censorship of one of our radio broadcasts that promoted the bill we have introduced in the National Assembly to change the country's military draft law. But we believe our road is the only way to peace.

Mr. Leiken never came by our office to check his information, which is not surprising, given that he is not interested in peace for Nicaragua but has been a publicist for the *contras* for years, first for Edén Pastora and, since the C.I.A. dropped Pastora, for Arturo Cruz.

It seems that many of your compatriots believe that they should have a voice in our country's political affairs. I hope you will print this letter and give us a voice up there, too.

Home Port for 'The New York Review'

This letter has thus far failed to make it into *The New York Review*, though two months have elapsed. Corrales's version was, incidentally, confirmed to me by Marc Cooper, who was covering the elections for *The Village Voice*: "I was there, and it wasn't some unknown mob that walked in. It was the rank and file of party delegates led by the youth section of the Conservative Democrats. These were people who had been at the Camino Real hotel for two days listening to that shit."

The New York Review is now snugly in bed with the most manipulative and devious strain in U.S. interventionism in Nicaragua. As we head toward the vote on $70 million in military aid and $30 million to renew and augment last year's $27 million in "humanitarian" aid (of which the Humanitarian Aid Office in the State Department has so far managed to spend only $12.2 million, with a G.A.O. report suggesting some has been stolen), there are three major factions in Congress: the Reagan Republicans, who want to get the C.I.A.—now supposedly confined to supplying "intelligence" to the *contras* and bamboozling Congress about Nicaraguan "disinformation" strategies—back in the business of supplying and leading a straightforward *contra* invasion; the Democratic leadership, which is now nervously placing most emphasis on the Contadora process; and the thirty or so swing Democrats grouped around Representative Dave McCurdy of Oklahoma, who got the $27 million in aid through. Hovering around this group are operators like Leiken and Bruce Cameron, a lobbyist for Americans for Democratic Action before his defection first to McCurdy's staff and then to the aromatic universe of the Center for Democracy in the Americas, adjacent to the Institute on Religion and Democracy. This brings us to the cold war haven of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and Social Democrats U.S.A., which is also now *The New York Review*'s ideological home port.

Even while Leiken carries forward the good work in *The New York Review*, Cameron has co-authored, with Penn Kemble, a head of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, a confidential "discussion paper on the Nicaraguan Resistance" called "From a Proxy Force to a National Liberation Movement," chock-full of detailed plans for a revived *contra* force along the lines regularly espoused by cold war Democrats since the end of World War II.

Of course Gunboat Democracy has to have more in its arsenal than pieties, and Cameron and Kemble are clear: "A Nicaraguan insurgency . . . will need sophisticated anti-aircraft weapons, including missiles. It will need the best quality intelligence. It will need expert military training. It will need an expert, dependable logistics operation."

We may imagine that the next McCurdy compromise will include some language about military training. Cameron, Leiken (so adept in the teachings of Mao) and *The New York Review* show us that basic continuity that stretches back from today's battles in Congress over Nicaragua to the thinking that fashioned the premises of the cold war.

More Swill From Marty

Writing about the bloody events in South Yemen, Martin Peretz, editor in chief of *The New Republic*, writes in his "diary" for March 10 at the back of that deplorable journal: "The causes of the coup are not readily grasped by Westerners. What do we know of the fratricide bred by antique tribal hatreds?" To judge by the paragraph preceding the material quoted above, Peretz himself is testimony to the potency of tribal loathing. He writes: "Nonviolence is so foreign to the political culture of the Arabs generally and of the Palestinians particularly. It is a failure of the collective imagination for which no one is to blame."

The time has long passed since such racism comes as a surprise in the pages of *The New Republic*, but familiarity should not breed indifference. The magazine's pages shame all who write in them. Actually the restraint of the Palestinians enduring Israeli occupation has been remarkable. On the subject of violence and nonviolence in the Levant let me once again cite some numbers. According to B. Michael, writing in *Ha'aretz* in July 1982, 282 Israelis were killed by Palestinian violence between 1967 and 1982. During that time the rest of Palestine was occupied; 200,000 Palestinians expelled; Jerusalem annexed; thousands of Palestinian houses blown up on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; and, according to Meron Benvenisti, approximately 52 percent of Palestinian land in those areas expropriated. Beginning in the early 1970s Israel systematically bombed Palestinian refugee camps in South Lebanon and Beirut and as far north as Tripoli, killing many thousands. And during the summer of 1982, the Israeli Army, conservatively, killed about 19,000 people in Lebanon, mostly Palestinians.

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CAPITOL LETTER.

KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

■ Gramm-mania

This is the tale of a lad who rose from modest circumstances to become a U.S. Senator. He was born in Fort Benning, Georgia, where his father was living on a veterans' disability pension. He went to the University of Georgia, a public institution, where his tuition and expenses were paid by the Federal War Orphans Act. He did graduate work in economics, paid for by a National Defense Education Act fellowship, and started his teaching career at Texas A & M, a Federal land-grant university.

The Senator is Phil Gramm, and the budget-balancing law that bears his name, along with those of Senators Warren Rudman and Ernest Hollings, threatens to impoverish the government agencies that provide the kind of programs that helped young Gramm. Washington has rarely been in a dither like the present one over Gramm-Rudman-Hollings.

The budget-balancing law has created overnight a cottage industry in the capital. *Congressional Quarterly* has been holding seminars at which staff members explain how the law will cut the deficit to $144 billion in fiscal 1987. At the first of these seminars the organizers had expected seventy-five attendees at $145 a head; more than 700 showed up. Local governments that want to know how much their Federal grants will be cut can go to the accounting firm of Touche Ross, which will tell them for a fee of $10,000 to $50,000. M. Wendell Belew Jr., until recently the chief counsel for the House Budget Committee, and Stephen E. Bell, the staff director of the Senate Budget Committee, have decided to cash in on the panic. Belew resigned to form the consulting firm of Mathis, Belew and Associates. He is hawking a budget newsletter for which charter subscribers pay only $350 a year. On March 15, Bell will leave the government to join David Stockman at Salomon Brothers as the firm's Washington representative.

Seminar participants, readers of Belew's newsletter and Bell's future lunch companions would be better off consulting a crystal ball. The truth is that Gramm-Rudman-Hollings is not airtight. The Federal budget is far too complex to be tamed by such a law, in which numerous loopholes will surely be found. A U.S. Appeals Court ruling that the provision for making automatic cuts is unconstitutional may be the first signal that the act is a legislative Halley's comet. The declining deficit, aided by lower oil prices, is another. The only safe observation amid all the Gramm-mania is that the clash over the budget this year will be, as Senator Pete Domenici says, "a planned train wreck."

■ The Unilateralists

David C. Mulford ought to be a household name, but it isn't. As Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs, Mulford is a key player in the growing unilateralism of U.S. foreign policy. Obsessed by its desire to overthrow the Sandinistas, the Reagan Administration is almost contemptuously brushing aside many of the norms of international conduct the United States was responsible for establishing after World War II. (The Institute for Policy Studies, 1901 Q Street NW, Washington, DC 20009, has just produced an excellent report on U.S. unilateralism, titled "Outcast Among Allies.") Nowhere does Mulford pursue unilateralism more recklessly than at the Inter-American Development Bank (I.D.B.), as a leaked February 1985 memorandum shows. Written by Kevin O'Sullivan, a British assistant to the bank's executive director, the memo is addressed to an official in Britain's Overseas Aid Agency.

> The [Nicaraguan] project has not been submitted to the board because of a series of highly questionable actions taken by management, presumably under American pressure. These include deliberately misleading statements to the board, the unauthorized removal of items from the agenda of various management committees, suppression of information and the disappearance of documents from files. The matter is an open scandal, and formal protests have been lodged by, or on behalf of, every member of the board of directors except the U.S. director.
>
> Against this background the Nicaraguans have continued to make repayments on their existing loans. At some stage in their development, later in the decade, they will face a period in which they are making payments to the I.D.B. without receiving any disbursements. It is reasonable to assume that part of the U.S. objective is, by lengthening that period, to push the Nicaraguans towards a position where they fail to honour their obligation to the I.D.B.

O'Sullivan goes on to tell an anecdote that suggests U.S. policy at the I.D.B. may be coordinated with U.S. support for the *contras*. In September 1983, during the consideration of the last loan to Nicaragua, for fishing boats, the U.S. director raised every conceivable objection to final approval. But what mystified the board, O'Sullivan notes, was the director's insistence on a clause in the loan that required Nicaragua to guarantee that adequate fuel for the fishing boats would be available. "You will find no precedent for such a fuel clause in any previous I.D.B. fisheries loan," O'Sullivan wrote. The following week U.S.-backed saboteurs blew up the fuel depot in the port of Corinto, their single most effective blow to the Nicaraguan economy, and to its capacity to service the external debt. The U.S. policy to drive Nicaragua out of the I.D.B. seems to be working: as of January Managua is officially in arrears, and any future loans are in doubt.

Among all the U.S. allies who are members of the I.D.B., only Britain and West Germany have remained silent while the Reagan Administration has steadily perverted the bank's role. Another leaked document, an internal memo of the Overseas Aid Agency, shows that the British consider U.S. erosion of multilateral institutions merely a public relations problem:

> There is no need to amend our voting policy towards Nicaragua for the time being. The problem of explaining it in public will, however, persist and we shall need to stick to our present line of claiming that our opposition is based on technical grounds.

At the bottom a British official had scrawled, "If we can find them."

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ARTICLES.

OPEC PRICE CUTS

The Saudis Brace For Hard Times

STANLEY REED

There is no mystery about why Saudi Arabia more than doubled its oil output in late 1985, leading to last month's market collapse. The Saudi leadership was simply trying to reverse a four-year trend of declining oil exports and income which has reduced the kingdom's international stature and may threaten its internal stability.

Saudi output has plummeted from nearly 10 million barrels a day in 1981 to just over 3 million a day in 1985. Oil revenues, which the Saudi royal family distributes to insure the loyalty of its subjects and to influence its neighbors financially, dropped to just $29 billion last year, compared with $110 billion in 1981.

Other members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries have seen their fortunes decline but not so sharply as Saudi Arabia's. Since 1979 conversion to alternative fuels, conservation measures and higher production by non-OPEC nations has steadily eroded demand for OPEC oil. Today OPEC sells only 16 million barrels a day, compared with 31 million in 1979. At first the wealthiest OPEC countries, including Saudi Arabia and the neighboring sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf, tacitly agreed to absorb the bulk of the necessary cutbacks. Then, in March 1983, the Saudis accepted the role of "swing producer," meaning they would adjust the volume of their exports to maintain market equilibrium. In return, the other OPEC members accepted a price cut of $5 a barrel, down to $29, and pledged their allegiance to an adjusted version of the production quotas set in 1982 (the first in OPEC history). The Saudis took a beating from this arrangement. Lower prices failed to stimulate demand, and many OPEC states cheated on their quotas. The situation became intolerable for the Saudis last summer, when their sales fell to just 1.2 million barrels a day—less than upstart producers such as Britain.

"Something had to be done," said Thomas R. McHale, a senior economist at Drexel, Burnham, Lambert, who served as an adviser on planning and hydrocarbons to the Saudi government from 1970 to 1975 and who keeps informed on Saudi thinking. According to McHale, the Saudis faced a grim future. They were drawing down their foreign exchange reserves at a pace that would exhaust them in two to three years, while a continued drop in sales would knock them out of the oil market even though they have the largest petroleum stocks in the world.

In late summer King Fahd instructed Oil Minister Ahmed Zaki Yamani to abandon the costly and futile efforts to defend OPEC prices. "We are not the guardians of anyone," Fahd told university students in Mecca on September 22, signaling a radical change. "We do not want to interfere in other [OPEC] member states' policies, but if . . . other members allow themselves to exceed production quotas or lower . . . prices, we will allow ourselves to do the same." Fahd implied that the kingdom would stay within its OPEC ceiling of 4.35 million barrels per day.

The Saudis greatly boosted their production in the fall. To gain a competitive advantage over other producers they offered their customers novel "netback" arrangements, which set prices according to what the products refined from the purchased crude would fetch. Netbacks shield buyers from risk by assuring them a fixed profit margin. This policy began in earnest the discounting that brought oil down from $28 a barrel in October to less than $12 at present.

Americans may find it hard to believe that the Saudis, who are often depicted as the archfiends of OPEC, would want lower prices, but Riyadh has consistently argued for price restraints since 1973. As mentioned, the Saudis engineered a cut in 1983, when they assumed the role of swing producer, and from 1979 to 1981 they took some of the steam out of the market by producing at nearly 10 million barrels a day, well above any conceivable financial need. In doing so they were responding to pressure from Washington, but they were also acting out of concern that in the long run exorbitant prices would lead the industrialized countries to invest in alternative fuels and conservation.

"The Saudis have historically recognized that oil could price itself out of the market," said McHale. "This was a

DRAWINGS BY BILL LOGAN

Stanley Reed is a writer who specializes on the Middle East.

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constant concern within the government when I was there, but the idea has never occurred to countries like Algeria and Iran." McHale put his finger on the fundamental point of contention among the major oil exporters. Algeria and Iran have many mouths to feed and limited reserves, so they want high prices in order to maximize revenues over a few years. At the opposite pole are the Arabian monarchies, particularly Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, which have tiny populations and enormous amounts of oil in the ground. Those three states, which have more than 40 percent of the world's proven reserves, will become increasingly dominant in the oil business over the next two to three decades, as other producers exhaust their supplies. The Saudis, for instance, have proven reserves of 170 billion barrels, more than 25 percent of the world total and enough for one hundred years of production at present levels. It is not surprising that they would favor moderate prices to insure a long life for their oil export business.

Although eventually lower prices will work in the Arabian producers' favor, they will not provide any magic solution to the countries' present economic difficulties. Prices have fallen so far that the Saudis will be hard pressed to earn much more this year than they did in 1985 without drastically increasing output beyond the current 4.5 million barrels a day. But the more they raise production the lower prices will fall, enraging the other OPEC countries. The recession that has plagued the gulf countries for the past three years will continue.

The Saudi economy began shrinking after the oil glut materialized in 1981, following a decade of explosive expansion. The government has decreased its overall spending only slightly, but it has trimmed development projects sharply. Construction companies, probably the most successful Saudi businesses in the 1970s, have suffered most from the tightening of the spigot. Their problems affected importers and manufacturers of building material supplies and then spread to the rest of the economy. Construction wages have fallen by half, rents by 40 percent, and the value of shares in Saudi companies by 70 percent. Although no one knows for sure, it is widely believed that their foreign exchange reserves have dropped as low as $45 billion, from a high of $150 billion four years ago.

The ripples of the economic contraction are being felt beyond the Persian Gulf. During the boom years millions of professionals and laborers from poor Arab countries and, more recently, from Asia migrated to the exporting nations, which, though rich in oil, were poor in human resources. Now tens of thousands of those expatriates are being sent home every month. As many as 1 million of the 2 million to 2.5 million foreigners who lived in Saudi Arabia may already have departed. This population shift has ominous implications for Egypt, Syria, Jordan, the Sudan and North Yemen, which have been major exporters of labor. Their hardly robust economies will have difficulty creating jobs for hundreds of thousands of returning workers. Moreover, for ambitious young people of those countries a job in the gulf region has been the main avenue to improved social standing. The savings they sent home supported their extended families, funded small businesses and generally made life a good deal more bearable. With this door to opportunity closed, the mood in Cairo and other Arab cities could turn ugly. Already Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has been forced to call in the army to put down rioting by poorly paid police conscripts.

Unless the present trend is reversed, the poorer Arab countries also face a loss of direct economic aid from Riyadh and the gulf states. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait provided $3.3 billion and $1.02 billion, respectively, in development assistance in 1984. In past years they generally doled out 3 to 4 percent of their gross national products for foreign aid, by far the highest percentage in the world. In addition, they have given huge subsidies to other Arab governments in the hope of influencing their policies. The 1978 Baghdad Conference, held to resist the Camp David accords, laid down rough guidelines for these payments. The oil producers committed themselves to provide the so-called front-line states with $3.5 billion annually for ten years. Syria was to receive $1.85 billion each year; Jordan, $1.25 billion; and the Palestine Liberation Organization, $300 million. Only the Saudis and the Kuwaitis come close to honoring those commitments. Jordan received only $450 million in 1985, nearly all of it from Saudi Arabia. Other beneficiaries of massive Saudi assistance, which is often given in secret, include Morocco, North Yemen and Bahrain. Finally, the Saudis and the gulf sheiks have financed Iraq's war against Iran to the tune of at least $25 billion since 1979.

Although Saudi officials insist that the handouts are vital to their security, the amounts will decline as foreign exchange reserves diminish further. The inability to spend as freely may cost them access in Damascus and Baghdad; however, Saudi leaders may overestimate the influence their money purchases. The billions of dollars lavished on Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat did not prevent him from making peace with Israel in defiance of Saudi wishes.

Some Arabians contend that the new era of straitened circumstances is a good thing because it will teach their spoiled societies more efficient business practices and better work habits. "We welcome this," said a Saudi businessman. "It used to be that merchants had no time for you. Now if they don't offer a quality product, they are out in the cold." But many businesses could not adjust to the new conditions. An estimated 1,500 companies in Saudi Arabia have gone bankrupt in the past two years. Well-known Saudis and the international banks, which used to fall over themselves trying to make loans to Arabian firms, have not gone unscathed. In 1984, Carlson al-Saudia, a joint construction venture of Saud bin Fahd, one of King Fahd's sons, and an American firm, shut down its operations in the kingdom, leaving $26 million in debts. According to the *Financial Times* of London, 3,000 Carlson expatriate workers who were left stranded survived on handouts from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and "underground Christian groups." During the past two years several prominent Arabian companies,

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including the Ali & Fahd Shobokshi Group, the A.R.E. Galadari firm and Redec, the conglomerate controlled by Ghaith Pharaon, the flamboyant Saudi entrepreneur, have asked the banks to reschedule loans ranging from $250 million to $400 million each.

International bankers are worried about the health of the Arabian financial systems. Five of the twenty-four banks in the United Arab Emirates have already required government rescue operations. Bankers in the gulf region estimate that as many as half of the outstanding Kuwaiti bank loans are delinquent. Saudi institutions are probably not in much better shape. The National Commercial Bank, Saudi Arabia's largest, recently announced that it set aside $189 million to cover bad debts last year, though it still made a $27 million profit. Saudi banks have little recourse when a debtor defaults. Islamic courts almost invariably side with the debtor on the ground that interest charges are usurious, thus prohibited by the Koran. As a result, banks are extremely wary of extending new credit, which only prolongs the recession.

The decline in oil revenues has also exposed the unsoundness of the Arabian economies. From 1973 through 1982 the gulf region was the scene of wild speculation. Real estate values and rents skyrocketed. Even poorly managed businesses could expect to make profits of around 75 percent a year. The speculative flame burned most intensely in Kuwait, where in 1982 an unregulated stock exchange known as the Souk al-Manakh collapsed, leaving $92 billion in uncollectable postdated checks. Speculators had used the checks, which carried premiums of 25 to 100 percent over contemporary share quotes, to drive up stock prices by as much as 200 percent a year. The companies themselves often had little commercial viability. The crash virtually wrecked the Kuwaiti private sector. Last November, Finance Minister Jassim al-Kharafi released a report stating that local companies were in such a sorry state that the majority of them ought to be either liquidated or merged. Confidence in the government was another casualty. The authorities have spent an estimated $10 billion to help bail out investors and creditors, but the nouveaux riches in the emirate feel that the government's handling of the crisis favored the handful of old families who still dominate politics and business.

Although there is no immediate political threat to the Saudi royal family or the other gulf rulers, there are certainly signs of strain. "Numbers of influential princes and businessmen have complained to the King that conditions have become intolerably difficult," wrote Michael Field, a British expert on Saudi Arabia, in the *Financial Times*, describing the reaction to Fahd's decision to raise production. And recently a well-placed Saudi grumbled: "The economic hardship is enough to start some underground cells. Thirty years from now they will surface."

In Kuwait the National Assembly, which is elected by an elite comprising male members of families who have lived in the sheikdom since 1922, has been remarkably critical of the government's and the royal family's handling of the economy. Last May harsh questioning by its members forced the resignation of the Justice Minister, Salman al-Duaij al-Sabah, a member of the ruling al-Sabah clan. The

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Minister denied charges that he had personally profited from his office but admitted that his 12-year-old son had received $5 million from a fund set up to bail out small stock-market investors. The Assembly has persistently demanded that the government withdraw the $12 billion it has invested in the United States, because of the American penchant, recently demonstrated in the confrontation with Libya, for freezing the assets of troublesome foreign countries. Kuwait appraises its investment portfolio at about $75 billion.

Even in Saudi Arabia there are disputes between the royal family and their Western-educated civil servants over how the kingdom's wealth should be managed. In 1983, Fahd appointed Ghazi al-Gosaibi as Minister of Health, with the understanding that he would clean up the bloated ministry, which was costing $6 billion a year. Al-Gosaibi, who had served as Minister of Industry for a decade, went about his job too zealously and clashed with powerful members of the royal family over contract awards and personnel matters. Angered by Fahd's lack of support, al-Gosaibi wrote a thinly veiled allegorical poem, which was published by the Riyadh newspaper *Al-Jezira* on March 5, 1984, scolding the King for listening to "a thousand slanderers" against his Minister. "You were not wont to be pleased by perfumed falsehood before," the poet complained. He was promptly sacked, but for a brief time the incident served as an intellectual rallying point for Saudis who think the royal family would be wise to share its power with its subjects. Fahd has not honored pledges he made on taking the throne to establish a consultative council that could act as a sounding board for the complaints of the merchants and the technocrats. (A building to house this long-awaited institution has been erected, but it stands empty.) He has even been reluctant to make changes in his Cabinet, although several of its members are too ill to perform.

Instead, Fahd has come to rely increasingly on his own clan in the vast royal family, which boasts 4,000 to 5,000 princes of the blood. The key members of the inner circle, who are known as the al-Fahd, include the King's six full brothers, among them Defense Minister Sultan, Interior Minister Naif and Riyadh Governor Salman. Although Fahd is considered intelligent and capable, he is not well liked. "I have never seen any expressions of genuine affection, enthusiasm or loyalty for Fahd," said a diplomat with long experience in Arabia. The King is dogged by the reputation for loose conduct that he acquired before ascending to the throne, in 1982. The perception among Saudis that he is overly pro-American also works against him.

Meanwhile, financial pressure and political disappointments are rapidly souring the special relationship that has existed between the United States and Saudi Arabia since American companies discovered oil in the kingdom in 1938. The Saudis, according to American officials and businessmen, are responding to declining income by finding all sorts of excuses not to pay their bills. Overdue payments on some American contracts have reached more than $100 million. No one contends that American firms are being singled out for this treatment, but their contracts, which tend to be for the largest amounts, are the most likely to be evaded. Some well-connected former American officials are now making a handsome living in the kingdom trying to persuade the Saudis to pay their debts to U.S. companies.

For their part, the Saudis find the Reagan Administration's inability or unwillingness to persuade Congress to sell them new arms humiliating and unjust. After all, they have paid U.S. military contractors tens of billions of dollars over the past decade to assure themselves of a reliable arms supply and American protection in an emergency. They registered their displeasure last fall by ordering almost $6 billion worth of Tornado fighters and other aircraft from Britain after it became clear that the Reagan Administration would not provide more F-15s. Nevertheless, they still consider themselves dependent on the United States in the event of an attack.

Crown Prince Abdullah, who is not a fan of the United States, will probably prove to be less accommodating to Washington when he succeeds Fahd, who is in poor health. But neither Abdullah nor his advisers, who are drawn primarily from the National Guard, which the Crown Prince commands, appear to have the intellectual capacity to take Saudi Arabia on a radically different course. Sultan, who will probably be the next Crown Prince, and the rest of the al-Fahd clan will retain considerable power.

So far Fahd's production-boosting gambit has proved popular with the Saudis, who consider membership in OPEC more of a burden than a blessing for their country. They credit Fahd with sending Washington and other oil exporters a message that Saudi Arabia must be taken seriously because it can wreck the oil market. "Personally, I would like to see the price go down to $5 a barrel," said a prominent Saudi banker with bravado. Saudis never tire of telling their listeners that they will win any price war because Saudi production costs of about 50 cents a barrel are the lowest in the world.

Despite all this oil-drum thumping, the odds that Saudi Arabia can shock the other oil producers into successfully limiting supply are even, at best. Moreover, because prices are so low, the Saudis are unlikely to increase their income significantly in the near future, and there is a risk that they will earn much less. Finally, there is the problem of Iran. The Iranians, who rely entirely on oil to finance the war with Iraq, are furious at Fahd for undermining the market and may succeed in bullying him into calling off his game. The recent Iranian advance into Iraqi territory near the border of Kuwait has frightened the gulf Arabs.

All of these problems make a sudden Saudi economic recovery difficult to foresee. Once again Saudis will be left to wonder how their rulers have spent $500 billion over the past fifteen years without bringing either full prosperity or security to the kingdom. □

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YUPPIES AND EVANGELICALS

The Shaky G.O.P. Coalition

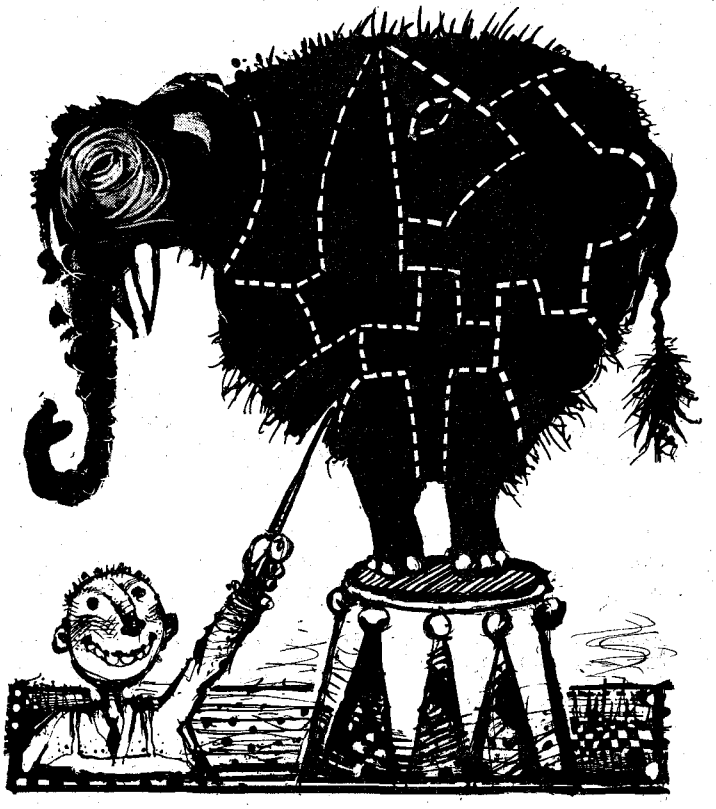
RONALD BROWNSTEIN

Early this year virtually all the 1988 Republican Presidential hopefuls gathered in Washington for the annual Conservative Political Action Conference, reflecting the full spectrum of interests and ideologies that coexist uneasily in the party. There was the crisp, earnest preppiness of Vice President George Bush and former Delaware Governor Pierre du Pont, men who would have had no trouble passing through the gates of the Republican Party of affluence and exclusion that selected Wendell Willkie as its nominee at the suggestion of a few Eastern power brokers. There was Senator Robert Dole, who stands for the traditional Midwestern Republican verities of sound management and prudent budgets. There was Representative Jack Kemp, the apotheosis of the new age Republicans, bringing the gospel of the conservative populist revolution—a call to recruit minority voters and union members to the party—to an audience most uncertain about what it means. And there was televangelist Marion (Pat) Robertson, the wild card in the 1988 Republican deck, the voice of the religious conservatives who have supported Ronald Reagan so faithfully throughout his career.

The newest arrivals to the Republican coalition, the religious conservatives (many of them former Southern Democrats), are also the most voluble. It is their agenda that is most likely to conflict with the interests of young voters and affluent suburbanites. Many Democrats expect the new Republican coalition to crack when Reagan is no longer around to hold it together. They may be overly optimistic. Even after five full years of Reagan, the religious right has not won enough to build up the pressure necessary for such an earthquake in the party. The President has spoken warmly of its social agenda, but success on the big-ticket issues, abortion and school prayer, is as elusive as ever. Although the religious right brought in many of its people for a tour of government, those have found (as many generations of liberals learned before them) that in the bureaucracy, zeal is as welcome as a purple mohawk hairdo.

The religious right's power in the Republican Party is more symbolic than substantive. The social conservatives can now induce 1988 Presidential hopefuls to attend their events and warble from their songbooks. As Thomas Edsall of *The Washington Post* has observed, religious conservatives are assuming a role in the Republican Party that to some extent parallels the one organized labor plays in the Democratic Party. It may be impossible, for example, for anyone who does not favor some restrictions on abortion to be a serious candidate for the Republican Presidential nomination. (Conversely, Representative Richard Gephardt of Missouri will test whether it is possible for anyone to become a serious Democratic Presidential contender while opposing free choice.) The mere discussion of a potential Robertson candidacy has turned up the heat. Kemp steps up his efforts against abortion funding and tells a religious group in Texas, "I believe in my heart that if we will acknowledge Him in everything we do, we trust Him and . . . allow Him to lead us, that's the only way ultimately to be a leader." Vice President Bush tells Jerry Falwell's Liberty Federation—the new name for the Moral Majority—that "America is in crying need of the moral vision" Falwell provides. If he wins the nomination in 1988, Democrats will haunt Bush with those nine words just about every day of the campaign.

Reagan brought the evangelical voters overwhelmingly into the Republican camp. In 1976 a majority of white evangelicals supported Jimmy Carter over Gerald Ford. In 1980 a majority supported Reagan over Carter. In 1984 Reagan received more than three-fourths of their vote. But Reagan has treated evangelicals much the way the Democratic Party treated black voters for many years. Democrats gave blacks who joined the party during the first term of the New Deal the bare minimum necessary to prevent them from leaving. It was only the irresistible pressure generated by Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement in the 1960s that overcame the reluctance of Democrats to confront their Southern supporters and act on civil rights. The coalition of economic interests assembled thirty years earlier by Roosevelt held, shakily, until its internal contradictions blew it apart, triggered by forces greater



Ronald Brownstein covers the White House and national politics for National Journal.

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than the politicians could control. And when the landmark Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act were finally passed and the full force of the political revolution was felt, the Republican Party put down its first substantial roots in the South since Reconstruction.

Understanding this parallel is crucial for assessing the Republicans' future. Reagan has assembled a collection of supporters as unlikely as the old Democratic coalition: disaffected urban ethnics; affluent, vaguely libertarian young people who don't want the government either to tax them or to police their social behavior; Southern fundamentalists who hate big business and want prayer in the schools; and businessmen who look on the fundamentalist preachers as no more than oily competitors for the consumer's dollar. Within this coalition are immense internal strains, as Republican pollster Lance Tarrance demonstrated last fall in a major survey of Reagan voters. The most profound fault line runs between the middle- to lower-income conservative populists and the libertarian Republicans. The former are suspicious of big institutions, receptive to government help for the little guy (whom they usually define to include themselves) and sympathetic to the Christian right's social agenda; the latter tend to be better educated, more affluent and less rural. It's a simplification, but the two groups could be personified by the Southern fundamentalist and the young suburban engineer.

On many key issues the two groups—each making up about 15 percent of Reagan's constituency by Tarrance's calculations—hold diametrically opposed views, with the rest of the coalition in between. Should the government protect U.S. industries against foreign imports? Fifty-five percent of the libertarians say no. Seventy percent of the populists say yes. Should the government fund the *contras* warring with the Sandinista government in Nicaragua? Sixty percent of the libertarians say no. Seventy percent of the populists say yes. Should fundamentalist religious groups engage in politics? Two-thirds of the libertarians say no. Just over half of the populists say yes.

Even their basic perceptions of the way power is distributed in this country and the role of government are often fundamentally different. Nearly half of the libertarians say they trust business; almost two-thirds of the populists distrust business. Two-thirds of the libertarians say government should do as little as possible to interfere in the lives of Americans; less than 10 percent believe it should guarantee "a decent standard of living for everyone." But virtually half of the populists believe government should provide such a guarantee.

As was the case with the old Democratic coalition, certain core propositions unite them: a belief that government has already done enough to help minority groups; a strong preference for cutting government spending rather than raising taxes; agreement on social issues beyond school prayer and abortion, such as opposition to legalizing marijuana and to homosexuals teaching in public schools. The glue that holds the two groups together is the perception that the Republicans are better at managing the economy than the Democrats. Indeed, polls show that the general public gives the Republicans a consistently strong lead over the Democrats as the party best able to insure prosperity.

Republican political strategists understand that as long as the economy looks healthy, social issues bring in more voters than they drive away. But if the Christian right agenda was ever adopted, that political dynamic would reverse. If abortion was banned, the focus would shift to a woman's right to a safe abortion; the issue would become tremendously potent for Democrats and split the Republicans. Many mainstream Republican strategists understand this as well as the Democrats do. Despite furious fund-raising in anticipation on both sides, however, a ban on abortion is unlikely. The social conservatives simply lack the Congressional votes to do what they want to do, and they won't have those votes any time in the foreseeable future. Nor can they generate enough pressure from outside Congress—as the civil rights movement did twenty years ago—to impel their somewhat reluctant Republican allies to put all their weight behind the social agenda. Their only hope for major changes lies with the Supreme Court, where Reagan could use new appointments to tip the balance against abortion and for school prayer. But vacancies depend on forces beyond their control.

Without a major legislative or court action that brings abstract social issues into concrete reality for the mass of Americans—as the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act did in the 1960s—the Republican coalition will not likely split along the cracks of the social issues. Still, anything that raises the profile of the conservative social agenda at the expense of economic issues could cause problems for the Republicans, whether it is Bush and the other candidates spending too much time challenging one another's purity, or Robertson becoming a symbol of the Christian right's growing strength in the Republican Party.

Jesse Jackson dramatized this basic proposition for the Democrats in 1984. His sheer prominence in the election raised racial sentiments and polarized voting to a frightening degree. Reagan won two-thirds of the white vote; he even carried 64 percent of the vote of white women. Some conservative social activists fear that Robertson too will polarize the electorate, hurt the Republican nominee and engender a backlash against their movement. And there is tension between those who want to increase their influence in the two-party system and those who want to launch their own crusade, mirroring the splits among black leaders over the Jackson candidacy in 1984.

There's no way to know in 1986 what kind of race Robertson might run, but some things are clear now. Robertson appears to be less threatening to voters of opposing views than the other well-known fundamentalist leader, Jerry Falwell. Falwell is viewed negatively by virtually every group of voters: Reagan supporters, self-described evangelicals, even residents of his home state of Virginia. (Virginia Governor Gerald Baliles felt so confident of the minister's unpopularity that in the final days of his campaign last fall he ran advertisements tying his Republican opponent to Falwell.) Robertson doesn't appear to inspire those same

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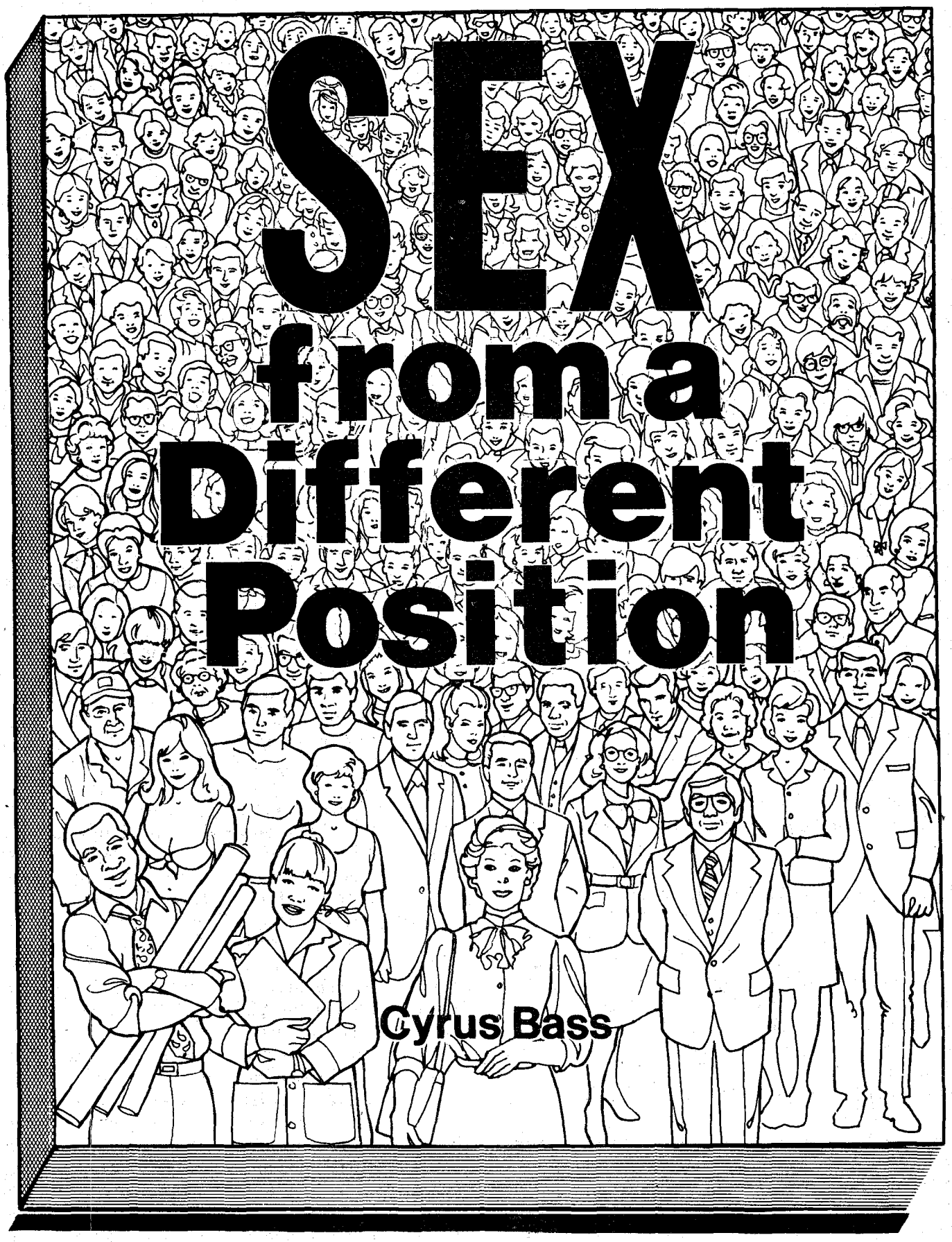

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Politics From A Different Position

THE "EVIL EMPIRE" Part I

The President, The Honorable Ronald Wilson Reagan, in a public address for all the world to hear, referred to the Soviet Union as "the evil empire." The President of the United States is the Commander in Chief of all our armed forces. He has the power, and the means with which to use that power, and that power can destroy all living things on earth many times over in less than an hour. So when our President speaks, the significance of what he says carries much more weight than when you and I speak. Was this remark a gaffe? I don't think so. I believe the remark was deliberate. The President was fully aware of what he said. Why did he say it? Let us see.

Ronald Reagan is a democrat in heart and mind. His teachers were those of the Roosevelt Brain Trust; his idol was Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Would a true Republican get twice elected president of the Screen Actors Guild? The Depression taught Reagan the meaning of economics. It taught him that the purpose of government was to spend, spend, spend. Roosevelt was the great spender, and by spending saved the nation from ruin. So Ronald Reagan became a believer in government spending. As subsequent events proved, he has become the greatest peacetime spender in our nation's history. He has given us the largest series of budget deficits in all time. But spending must have meaning. It must have a purpose.

When Reagan became the traveling spokesman for General Electric he learned the purpose of government spending. The purpose of government spending was succinctly verbalized by the then president of General Motors. He said, "What is good for General Motors is good for the nation." And by extension, what is good for General Electric is good for the nation. This was the new lesson Ronald Reagan learned and by applying this lesson diligently was able to get twice elected President of the United States.

When he first ran for election he told the American people that they were suffering from too much government. Let us get government off our backs. That was not the only problem we the people had. He told us that government must stop spending so much of our money. Too many taxes; too much government spending he kept repeating. Also there were too many government regulations. We must have a constitutional amendment for a balanced budget he explained. And the people cheered. That was not all. We should bring religion to the schools. What is wrong with prayer in the schools? Is it not true that both Houses of Congress begin their sessions with prayer. Why not the schools. What is good for Congress should be good for the schools. The audience cheered.

Was Ronald Reagan contradicting himself? Not at all. An actor's feelings and beliefs are not germane to the script he reads. The script is written for the audience so as to make it laugh, not to satisfy the actor's feelings and beliefs. The audience laughed and so Reagan was elected President.

Once he entered the White House he knew he had power, the power to spend. But how spend without raising the ire of the people? A perfect formula took shape: defense! This formula had been germinating in Reagan's mind for years. He learned that the way to improve the economy was government spending. By giving billions upon billions of government dollars to industry the economy would boom. But which industries? The industries which would make our nation strong against Communism. The Soviets, the fortress of world Communism, were building the greatest military machine to conquer the world for Communism so we better watch our step or they will succeed. That was the rationale.

Just the right words for General Dynamics, General Motors, General Electric, Bechtel and on and on. Soon billions upon billions of taxpayers' money began to pour into the coffers of these industries. And sure enough, the economy started to boom. Down went inflation. Down went interest rates. Up shot the stock market. The President was right. The way to improve the economy was government spending. Was Reagan insincere? Was he hypocritical? Not at all! What would happen to our economy if General Dynamics and Bechtel were suddenly to close their doors? A depression would follow. Not only would we suffer, so would the rest of the world. But what about the huge budget deficit? Oh, well, can't that wait until we beat the Communists?

Every nation has its troublemakers. In our country troublemakers are allowed to talk and write. Soon these troublemakers began to ask questions. Why do we need so many of these sophisticated nuclear weapons? Why are we supplying backward dictatorial nations high technology weapons of destruction? Are we not a democracy? Why do we support dictators? Are dictators really our friends? Or are they only using us? Soon members of Congress also began to ask questions. And Reagan did not like that because it would jeopardize his spending program. So he went before the people to remind them, lest they had forgotten, that there was that "evil empire" out there. Let us not become complacent and lower our vigilance against that "empire." And the people understood.

Now let us look at the other side. How do the people of the Soviet Union think, feel, when they hear our President call them the names he does? Should it be of any concern to us? I believe it should. Let us attempt to examine the thinking processes of the Soviet people.

The Soviet leaders are highly religious. This statement may come as a shock to most people because most people have a constricted conception of the meaning of the term religion. To most people the term religion means a belief in the supernatural. But religion in its broadest sense means a system of beliefs which is verifiable only to the mind of the believer. That would explain why there are so many religions. The religion of the Soviets is based not on the belief in the supernatural but in what they call the natural. It goes somewhat like this: During the evolution of man, the human being went through continuous stages of development, not only anthropologically but also economically. The religion of the Soviets is based upon the concept of economic evolution. Their bible is *Das Kapital*. The first testament was written by the prophet Karl Marx and the other two by his collaborator, the prophet Frederick Engels.

In addition to their bible, as in all religions, there are many writings by numerous interpreters, the two most noted ones being Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov of Russia, better known as Nikolai Lenin, and Lev Davidovich Bronstein also of Russia, better known as Leon Trotsky. The generic term for this religion is known as *scientific socialism*, and it is as scientific as the religion Christian Science is science. Needless to say,

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as in all religions, all interpreters do not come up with the same interpretations and conclusions about their religion. In fact the interpretations and the conclusions vary so much, as in all religions, that the interpreters soon engage in conflicts among themselves which at first are only verbal but then turn to physical violence, leading to death and destruction.

The litany of *scientific socialism* goes as follows: First, economic man began as hunter, fisherman, farmer. Then farming led to serfdom, serfdom led to feudalism, feudalism led to mercantilism, mercantilism to capitalism, then comes socialism, i.e., heaven, the wave of the future, which their religion explains is the natural progression of economic man. The coming of socialism is therefore inevitable.

There were among the believers in *scientific socialism* those who were impatient. They did not want to wait until the progression of evolution brought heaven to earth. They were afraid they would not live that long. So they advocated revolution. These believers became known as communists. The main mover who led the break away from evolution to revolution was Lenin. In 1898 he set forth the communist program titled *Our Programme*; then two years later, 1900, he gave the communists the blueprint for action which he called, "What Is To Be Done?" For the next eighteen years the communists began to proselytize their religion around the world, forming groups of believers in Europe, Asia, and the United States. World War I helped them along. By the end of 1922 what was once Holy Russia was now Communist Russia. The term communism with a small "c" became Communism with a capital "C." More about this in Part II.

In the scriptures of Communism two fundamental dogmas prevail. One is the belief that "capitalism" can survive only by fomenting and provoking war. The other dogma is that the United States is the citadel of world "capitalism." The leaders of the Soviet Union have been teaching these dogmas to their people as gospel since the revolution. Thus the feelings of the Soviets towards the United States are rather hostile. They are deathly afraid that one day when economic pressures get the better of us we will attack the Soviet Union. To protect themselves they have built a military machine of overwhelming power and with that power they hope to prevent the "capitalist," "imperialist" world power, the United States, from attacking them. For every nuclear warhead we build they want to build two. The Soviet land is pockmarked with bomb shelters. The people live in dread of the day when, according to their gospel, the United States will launch a nuclear attack. They too want to defend themselves, and the defense is against the "capitalist" enemy. So when our President calls their country an "evil empire" he gives the Soviets further cause to increase their arsenals.

(Continued in the next issue)

Sex From A Different Position

CYRUS BASS

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passions. In a private poll of Republicans taken last fall, Robertson's thermometer rating—a tool used to measure how warm the public feels toward an individual—was 53.1, only a few degrees below most of the other potential 1988 contenders in both parties, who clustered in the range from 54 to 59. Falwell, by contrast, registered a chilly 33.1, far lower than anybody tested.

Robertson is cherubic, calm and smart. He will have lots of money, enough to buy good advisers if he wants them. He is also shrewd enough to try to avoid, at least at this point, presenting himself as the evangelical candidate. He stresses his business background—his Christian Broadcasting Network is nothing if not a temporal success—and his diverse credentials: son of a Senator, Golden Gloves boxer, graduate of Yale Law School. When he spoke to reporters at the National Press Club last fall, he talked about national and international debt. He mentioned the Bible less often than Ronald Reagan usually does when he gives speeches south of the Mason-Dixon line.

What Robertson will learn as the 1988 campaign nears is that a potential candidate must not say one thing to excite the converted while presenting an entirely different image to everyone else. Robertson seems to want to do just that. With Washington reporters last year he discussed economics; at the Conservative Political Action Conference, just months later he raised the roof against "rampant homosexuality," the "tyrannical oligarchy" of the Supreme Court, the breakdown of contemporary morals, prisons that are like hotels, new math, even school textbooks that devote more space to Mohammed than to Jesus. Unlike many of his colleagues, Robertson doesn't sound angry or mean when delivering such lines; his tone is more of concern and disappointment. But once television cameras start covering his campaign, the sentiments he must express to inspire his political base will hinder him in reaching beyond it.

How much this base wants an expressly fundamentalist candidate will be one of the more intriguing questions of 1988. Evangelical Christians make up anywhere from one-fourth to one-third of the population, depending on how the term is defined. But they are a much more diverse lot than is usually assumed. Overwhelmingly they voted for Ronald Reagan in 1984, but like many of the President's supporters, they are not uniformly conservative. Only about one-fourth are fundamentalists—conservative in both politics and theology—calculate Stuart Rothenberg and Frank Newport, the authors of *The Evangelical Voter*, published in 1984 by the conservative Institute for Government and Politics, the same organization that sponsored Tarrance's study of the Reagan coalition.

On social issues the larger evangelical group's views are quite diverse. A majority of those surveyed by Rothenberg and Newport support the Equal Rights Amendment; even more feel that birth control information should be disseminated in public schools. Falwell speaks of this broad group as a moral majority, but the National Organization for Women had a better image among the evangelicals surveyed than did Falwell's group. Also, among fundamentalists and evangelicals are many who take their religion so seriously that they don't want it sullied with politics. They follow a long tradition in evangelical thought, especially among Southern Baptists, expressed in the Rev. Bob Jones Jr.'s characterization of Falwell as "the most dangerous man in America so far as biblical Christianity is concerned." The most interesting aspect of a Pat Robertson candidacy could be less the strains it produces on the overall Reagan coalition than the dilemma it presents millions of individual evangelical voters, who will have to draw a line for themselves between church and state. □

Handicapping

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

that a Socialist president should receive tributes for destroying the only radical option. When I suggested that Mitterrand's proposed model for his party is no longer the social-democratic variety but the American Democratic Party, in *The Nation* of November 30, 1985, I feared I would be sued for libel. I didn't know I was taking the argument almost from the horse's mouth. In July's book the same statement is attributed to Jean-Louis Bianco, Mitterrand's chief of staff.

The lack of passion may also be attributable to the new system of proportional representation. Under the old electoral law, each district elected one deputy. There were fierce individual battles, duels between gladiators in which prominent politicians might be felled. Under the new system each party's national headquarters draws up a list of candidates, and voters may not interfere with the order of candidates on the list. So important politicians' heads will not go on the block, because their position at the top of the list guarantees their election. Indeed, in four out of five districts the results can be predicted in advance.

France is divided into ninety-six *départements* and has ten overseas districts. Under proportional representation there is, theoretically, one deputy for every 100,000 people. In practice, small *départements*—even those with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants—will elect at least two deputies. The largest, Paris and the North, will choose twenty-one and twenty-four deputies, respectively. Given the method of calculating election results (too complicated to go into here) and the absence of a national compensation system like Italy's, whereby small parties that score a certain percentage of the total vote are awarded at-large seats, proportional representation is biased in favor of the biggest parties—the Socialists and the conservative coalition. It is estimated that if the latter takes 43 percent of the vote, it will win a bare majority of seats in the National Assembly, 289 out of a total of 577.

With that background in mind, here is what to look for in the March 16 elections. The key test will be whether the conservative coalition, consisting of the neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic (R.P.R.), headed by Chirac, and the Union

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s correspondent in Europe.*

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for French Democracy (U.D.F.), led by Giscard and Barre, can muster 45 percent of the vote, giving it a comfortable majority of 300 seats, enough to challenge the President in the legislature. The Socialists' target is 30 percent of the vote and 200 deputies. That showing would enable them to serve as a magnetic pole in the event that the "respectable" right does not gain a majority and enters into a coalition with the racist Jean-Marie Le Pen. For the Communists, who are predicted to win close to fifty seats, it is a matter of recovering from their dismal showing in the European Parliament elections two years ago, in which they took only 11 percent of the vote, a historic low for the party. Finally, Le Pen's xenophobic National Front need not win much more than a dozen seats, say, 8 percent of the vote, to become a permanent sore on the French body politic. Its very presence has already poisoned the platforms of other parties.

How many deputies the respectable right will elect remains the crucial question. No one knows what will happen if the President is faced with a hostile Assembly. The hybrid Constitution of the Fifth Republic, half parliamentary and half presidential, is still untested. How will this odd two-headed bird fly with each head pulling it in the opposite direction? Everybody, therefore, thinks of the morning after, and this is particularly true of the right. But it is difficult now to distinguish the traditional divisions of the French right—liberal and authoritarian—when the alleged neo-Gaullist Chirac damns all government planning and is ready to accept American hegemony in the Strategic Defense Initiative. (General de Gaulle must be turning in his grave.) It is easier to perceive the political calculations of the leaders. Barre, who does not have a sizable party machine but is doing well in opinion polls, wants an immediate confrontation with the Socialists. Although moderate in his criticism of them, he scorns the very idea of coexistence with the President. For him, the sooner a presidential election is held the better. Conversely, Chirac, head of the biggest party but down in opinion polls, attacks the Socialists violently, yet he would be willing to serve as Mitterrand's Prime Minister in order to gain time to restore his fortunes.

Mitterrand can do with such unwitting support because he himself is likely to be in an awkward position. Having openly campaigned for the Socialists—their main slogan is "Give the President a workable majority"—he will be identified with their defeat. For him the best result would be a situation in which the respectable right needed Le Pen's bloc to form a government. Such a deal would be too much for some of the liberal conservatives to stomach. But that is unlikely to happen, so Mitterrand will have to rely on all the weapons in the constitutional arsenal and on dissension among his opponents. He is an astute tactician, and you can count on political fun and games.

The government's important last gift to French voters before the election was a new television channel, the fifth, inaugurated with pomp and ceremony on February 20. La Cinq is the first fully commercial national network. Its birth was like a soap opera, or rather a morality play on political hypocrisy. On one side you had the Socialists swallowing as fast as they could all their past attacks on America's cultural hegemony, of which commercial television had been the most degrading symbol. On the other side you had the right, which was even funnier. It suddenly discovered the virtues of public service and became all artsy-craftsy, bleeding at the very thought that films, works of art, would now be sliced like salami and sandwiched with commercials. The posture was more farcical when one knew the real reason for this rage. Since money available for television advertising is not unlimited, La Cinq could frustrate the right's own plans to sell public television at a rock-bottom price to its commercial backers and, in particular, to hand over one big channel to press lord Robert Hersant—or Herr Sant, as *Le Canard Enchaîné* used to spell it, as a reminder of the honorable gentleman's collaboration with the Nazis.

What casts a shadow over France now, however, is not so much Hersant's past as his present position as France's biggest press tycoon. He owns 38 percent of the national press, including *Le Figaro* and *France-Soir*, and 26 percent of the provincial press. Laughing at the press antitrust law, he has just bought out a competitor in Lyon, thus insuring a monopoly in France's second-most-important economic region, the Rhône Valley. The eloquent preachers of pluralism on the right didn't utter a word of protest. Pluralism is for Poland and, anyhow, you don't attack the high and mighty. And Citizen Hersant has power. If all goes well, he will control more than a dozen deputies in the next National Assembly, including himself, his son, former or future ministers and other scribbling servants. Power and ambition. From the press and radio, he now stretches to television and begins to look beyond French frontiers.

The "unacceptable face of capitalism"? Come off it. We are living in a world with a strange vocabulary, full of

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contradictions in terms—"caring capitalism" is Maggie Thatcher's latest—and sad pleonasms like "socialism with a human face." The final comic twist in the French campaign was provided by the monthly economic statistics. Because the retail price index was excellent, the Socialists paraded as the upholders of price stability, the greatest of all social virtues. Because the unemployment figure was bad, an increase of 2.4 percent, the right shed crocodile tears for the proletarian victims. The world upside down? The expression does not fit, since it often refers to a revolution, and revolutionary is the last adjective one would use in connection with this campaign. Farcical is more accurate. □

NATO Vote

(*Continued From Page 293*)

since the ill-fated Popular Front in 1936. Many civil servants are the children or grandchildren of Republican exiles. They hold degrees from French, English or American universities and worked abroad until the final days of the Franco regime. Prime Minister González grew up in average circumstances and was a labor lawyer.

Once in power these people initiated modest but symbolically important changes in the power structure. The government has gone after commercial corruption and tax fraud, which were practically ignored during the Franco era. It has replaced incompetent officials in the nationalized industries, such as Iberia Airlines and the railroad system. It is renovating much of Spain's obsolete industrial plant and is overhauling the pension and health-care systems. While reforming the university system and broadening public education, it has continued to subsidize the Catholic schools. It has passed a limited abortion law, struck down the pernicious system whereby citizens were forced to pay court costs, and prosecuted policemen accused of torture. It has moved effectively against the Basque terrorists while improving relations with the autonomous Basque government, and it has negotiated with the Moslem communities of Ceuta and Melilla, Spanish enclaves in Morocco, with a view to granting citizenship to longtime residents.

The record also has its negative aspects, but the government has made significant progress toward a more just society. The many economic and social reforms introduced by the Socialists were made possible by its large, disciplined majority in the legislature. If the Socialists lose ground in the coming parliamentary elections or are forced to enter a coalition government, most of those reforms will surely be slowed, if not reversed. Thus the referendum, which has stirred up a volatile mix of reactions from the opposition parties—calls for revenge, caustic satire, revived chauvinism—will affect Spain's political future far more than its military security. GABRIEL JACKSON

Gabriel Jackson, professor emeritus at the University of California, San Diego, is the author of several books on Spanish history. He now lives in Barcelona.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Free and Clean

DOUGLAS CRASE

THE GRANITE PAIL: The Selected Poems of Lorine Niedecker. *Edited by Cid Corman. North Point Press. 111 pp. $11.*

FROM THIS CONDENSERY: The Complete Writing of Lorine Niedecker. *Edited by Robert J. Bertholf. The Jargon Society. 336 pp. $30.*

Not long after Lorine Niedecker died, on December 31, 1970, her husband recalled that when she first told him she was a poet, she whispered it. "Later on," he said, "I got the devil bawled out of me when I told somebody in a tavern that my wife was a writer. She didn't want it known. She was bashful." They had married eight years earlier, when Niedecker was 60, and had recently built a little house on Black Hawk Island in the Rock River just above Lake Koshkonong—the place in southern Wisconsin where the poet was born and where, with few interruptions, she lived throughout her life. It was in the living room of this house that her husband spoke to a reporter: "After she left, I thought, 'Who is she?' 'And what was she?'"

His questions have not been answered yet. Because Niedecker (say "kneedecker") married so late, because for many years before that she lived alone on the river with no telephone, because her primary link to the literary world was her thirty-year correspondence with Louis Zukofsky and because her other correspondents were also Objectivist poets or their admirers, because she wrote short-line poems, and because we really don't know enough about her otherwise, a largely sentimental image has come to stand where the answer to her husband's questions ought to be. According to this image, she was the American bittern of poetry, a Thoreauvian Bashō who somehow got reincarnated female in the upper Midwest but adjusted to the accident with Objectivist therapy. She crafted poems of "nicety" and "discretion" and made them, we have been told, of language "whittled clean"; poems the more emphatically discrete for the silence in which they were said to be contained.

This image is about to come unstuck. For years you couldn't get a Niedecker collection anywhere, and now there are two of them, sufficiently different to demonstrate how truly inadequate our understanding of this poet is. One is a selected poems, *The Granite Pail*, edited by Cid Corman. The other is a complete poems plus creative prose, *From This Condensery*, edited by Robert J. Bertholf. Corman puts together a seductive selection unencumbered by notes or textual variants; some of its pages are almost unencumbered by words, since this is the Niedecker planted in silence, the orthodox version up to now. Bertholf, by contrast, counts more than four times as many poems in his collection; working directly with the poet's manuscripts, he has turned out a Niedecker that is rangy, turbulent and sometimes troubling as well.

Maybe no one is more surprised than these editors, because the result of their contrasting presentations is a disagreement over Niedecker's intentions and methods that amounts, ultimately, to a disagreement over her achievement as a poet. The issue is joined in what is probably her best-known poem:

> There's a better shine
> on the pendulum
> than is on my hair
> and many times
> . . .
> I've seen it there.
>
> ("There's a better shine")

Even by itself, which is how Corman prints it, this is a complex performance. By itself, it is a subtle reflection on life's vanity, say, on the cycle of personal fate. But when Niedecker first published the poem, in 1936, it wasn't by itself. It was third in a six-part sequence, "Mother Geese," arranged among other poems predominantly concerned with cycles of a more inclusive sort—the economic and political cycles whose reality was vivid during the Depression years when "Mother Geese" was written. As an expansion of context, the sequence is so effective that when its last line finally tolls

> lost, our land, forever

you are likely to hear how *this* pendulum was attached all along not just to the ticking heart but to a ticking economy too.

So much for the discrete poem. In a manuscript note (included among the "Notes" in Bertholf), Niedecker observes of another poem that "these phrases that look forward and back are fascinating to do but I suppose there's a limit." A limit, that is, unless you can arrange the poem within a longer sequence where poem as well as phrases look forward and back. It's a distinguished strategy, ever since Whitman. The trouble is that Niedecker rearranged her work continually in this manner, so that at the time of her death a single poem might exist in several versions, in more than one position among the sequences, in a sequence and on its own. On the evidence of *The Granite Pail*, which moves smoothly forward with no hint of options, Corman must believe that what Niedecker required was a good editor. Bertholf is inclined to let the manuscripts have their own way (which is how we got "Mother Geese"), so that *From This Condensery* is thick with variants and near-outright repetitions. It's impossible to say how many of these Niedecker intended to clean up. Not all of them, probably, since way back in 1955 she had concluded, as if in anticipation of Jennifer Bartlett or Steve Reich, that "a recurring thing, for all but the apathetic student, is never the same." Her poem "Dear Paul: Four Versions" (as Bertholf prints it) certainly suggests that her conclusion was based on practice. Maybe we have caught up with her, or maybe it's only that our current esthetic validates her indecision, but here is a poem whose ever-shorter alternatives read as a single work, each succeeding version a more daring synecdoche for the first, and the whole thing an affecting commentary on the dubious, time-honored business of leaving things out.

The irony is that Bertholf left so little out of his edition and then chose to call it *From This Condensery*. The phrase comes from one of Niedecker's least satisfying and most self-regarding poems, but its elevation was probably inevitable, since it echoes the Poundian and then Objectivist notion that a poet's job is to condense the raw material until he or she has revealed the discrete poem waiting at its core. Of course Niedecker would sometimes borrow this expres-

Douglas Crase is the author of The Revisionist *(Little, Brown).*

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sion; it isn't easy to find the right metaphor for how you make metaphors. But what is equally clear now is how much she was aware that her own methods differed from those of her correspondents, and that this difference would not be recognized for some time. In the poem "Otherwise" she has turned for sympathy to a likewise idiosyncratic practitioner, Gerard Manley Hopkins, addressing him as "Dear friend," and getting in along the way an unusually irreverent pun on the name of the master condenser, Ezra Pound:

> the scanning's plain
> but who will veer
> from the usual stamp and pound
> Other work?—I've not yet found
> the oak leaves' law . . .

Maybe she hadn't codified it, but in her poems Niedecker returns often enough to "the law of the oak leaf" to indicate that here was the law she meant to follow in poetry.

Good enough, but aren't we just out on a limb with another metaphor? It would be better to watch the poet in action, and if you are patient with the perversely unindexed *From This Condensery,* there will be times when you can almost see how a poem took shape. One especially redeeming example is in "Crèvecoeur," a poem written after *Letters from an American Farmer.* Bertholf prints the initial prosy poem in which Niedecker has entered two lines that seem only recently harvested from her reading: "Astonishing how quick men learn who serve themselves./ At night the fireflies can be caught and used as a reading/light." When this harvest reappears in a more obviously finished poem, the transformation has been dramatic:

> Learn Crèvecoeur and learn fast
> the firefly, two pairs of wings
> and a third to read by
> disappearing.
>
> ("For Paul")

Shorter by three words, this is hardly a condensation. The poem has expanded, burgeoned almost—the way (why not?) an oak leaf takes up its mineral facts and unfolds from the bare branch. "True value," this poet has written elsewhere, "expands."

As it turns out, the leaf metaphor was no more wholly Niedecker's own than was the condensery. Oak leaves show up in the first sentence of Zukofsky's famous 1931 brief for Objectivist poetics, and he would later remark to her in a letter that to prepare for a poem you must wait for the fact to die out and come back like a leaf on a branch. Surely, she knew where the metaphor came from. Just as surely, there were bound to be differences in what it would mean to her. At home on the Rock River her father had been a commercial fisherman who sometimes took his daughter along to seine for carp on the lake and river. "I spent my childhood outdoors—," she remembered, "redwinged blackbirds, willows, maples, boats, fishing (the smell of tarred nets), twittering and squawking noises from the marsh." It was a world of natural reality too sensuous for her ever to leave.

> My life
> by water—
> Hear
>
> spring's
> first frog
> or board
>
> out on the cold
> ground
> giving
>
> ("My Life by Water")

Yet there was also the world of words, and Niedecker acknowledged in particular the influence of her mother, every day "speaking whole chunks of down-to-earth magic." It must be too simple to say that poetry provided the theater where Niedecker could mediate the tug of war between her father's magic facts and her mother's magic words. Yet in the earliest poem made available by Bertholf, a poem printed in her high-school yearbook nine years before Zukofsky's essay, this tug of war between reality and words is already Niedecker's subject. It was still the subject a year before she died, when she observed in a letter to Corman that a poetic method was successful if it suggested "the reality that may get inside us and fill the subconscious of the future!" If this is what she also understood from Zukofsky about the fact coming back like a leaf on the branch, then we have in Lorine Niedecker a magnificent example of how good poets turn influence to—it's irresistible—misprision.

Misprision, "devoted treason," is the infraction partly illustrated by the poem set off in the preceding paragraph. Yes, those short lines and tripartite divisions are reminiscent of certain earlier poems of William Carlos Williams, who once counted Niedecker, along with Zukofsky and himself, among the original Objectivists. But the alliteration, the assonance, the near-rhymes—these add up to a sensuousness you may rarely

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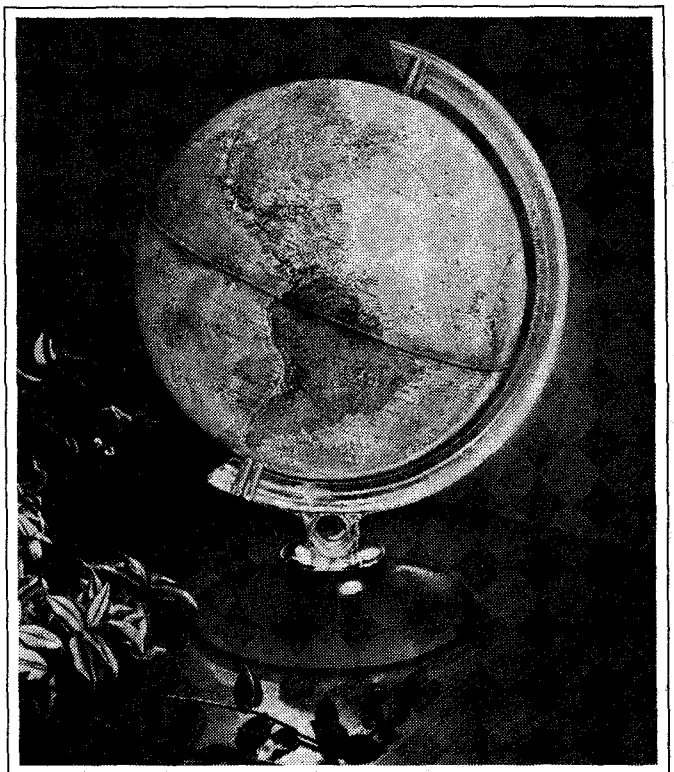

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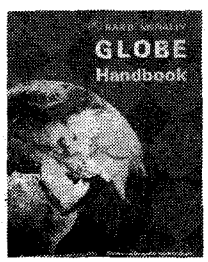

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Darwin (I)

His holy
slowly
mulled over
matter

not all 'delirium
of delight'
as were the forests
of Brazil

'Species are not
(it is like confessing
a murder)
immutable'

He was often becalmed
in this Port Desire by illness
or rested from species
at billiard table

As to Man
'I believe Man . . .
in the same predicament
with other animals'
(from "Darwin")

Black Hawk held: In reason
land cannot be sold,
only things to be carried away,
and I am old.

Young Lincoln's general moved,
pawpaw in bloom,
and to this day, Black Hawk,
reason has small room.

Watching dancers on skates

Ten thousand women
and I
the only one
in boots

Life's dance:
they meet
he holds her leg
up

Effort lay in us
before religions
at pond bottom
All things move toward
the light

except those
that freely work down
to oceans' black depths
In us an impulse tests
the unknown
(from "Paean to Place")

Paul
when the leaves
fall

from their stems
that lie thick
on the walk

in the light
of the full note
the moon

playing
to leaves
when they leave

the little
thin things
Paul
(from "For Paul")

The wild and wavy event
now chintz at the window

was revolution . . .
Adams

to Miss Abigail Smith:
You have faults

You hang your head down
like a bulrush

you read, you write, you think
but I drink Madeira

to you
and you cross your Leggs

while sitting.
(Later:)

How are the children?
If in danger run to the woods.

Evergreen o evergreen
how faithful are your branches

Laval, Pomeret, Petain
all three came to an end.

Bourdet, Bonnet, Daladier
so did they.
They tried each other
they sold out their brother

the people of France.
Let's practice your dance.

Get a load
of April's
fabulous

frog rattle—
lowland freight cars
in the night

from *From This Condensery: The Complete Writings of Lorine Niedecker* (The Jargon Society)

associate with Zukofsky or even Williams. And because she could deploy this sensuous magic without getting burned, a skill she had begun to perfect in "Mother Geese," Niedecker could take on subjects sometimes thought too hot for modernist poets to handle:

How bright you'll find young people,
Diddle,
and how unkind.
When a boy appears with a book
they cry "Who's the young Einstein?"
Einstein, you know, said space
is what it's made up of.
And as to the human race
"Why do you deeply oppose its passing"
you'll find men asking
the man with the nebular hair
and the fiddle.
("For Paul")

Sophisticated in its ambiguities, lucid as a nursery rhyme, this poem is also distinguished by something that makes it highly unusual in recent poetry—you can memorize it. Because of its music, you may even *want* to memorize it: a poem about nuclear extinction that works because it's so subversively joyful.

It also works because, as with the pendulum poem, Niedecker has fitted it into a sequence that greatly expands its context. This sequence, "For Paul," is addressed to a talented child of 6 as a sort of premonitory guidebook to the magical outside world, a vade mecum as concerned with questions of public and private virtue as if Anne Bradstreet had returned to bequeath a state-of-the-art version of her *Meditations* to the children of a very altered Commonwealth. Written for the most part in the early 1950s, and arguably the central work of Niedecker's career, "For Paul" was apparently published piecemeal but never as the single work the poet manifestly intended. Its recovery and restoration by Bertholf must rank as the biggest surprise and the triumph of *From This Condensery*. As an arrangement of fifty constituent poems—and more if you include the alternative ending (don't)—"For Paul" provides the richest opportunity for Niedecker to indulge her redemptive talent for resonant, subtle and also humorous transitions.

It may seem devious in a review to praise transitions, since you can't exactly quote one. But transition is the element that imparts the unimpeded grace to Niedecker's late and finest sequences: "Lake Superior," "Thomas Jefferson,"

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"Darwin," "Paean to Place." Each of these demonstrates that, for this poet anyway, poetry is enlivened during those moments it looks both forward and back. How different this turns out to have been from the Objectivist conceit, at least as expressed by Zukofsky, that no verse should be called a poem unless it conveyed "the totality of perfect rest."[1] For Niedecker, accustomed by her river to fluxes of flood and silt, humans themselves were a transition (a transition of minerals in "Lake Superior"), and their cultural evolution likewise a transit of fact as it leafs into words. So nothing could be more important than this unrestful evolution where we in fact *make* our lives and which is, so poets hope, the project of poetry.

Until now, Niedecker's engagement with the project hasn't received much attention. Last September, a reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* asked, "Why have the critics been so slow?" One answer is that even admirers may transmit unexamined attitudes: in 1969 a British critic noted that the "complexity" of Niedecker's writing was "hidden under feminine ease"; in the United States in 1972 another said that her "concerns are always close to home and personal in ways peculiarly feminine." So you may be surprised to learn from Bertholf's introduction that Niedecker worked two years for a Madison radio station and another six for a national dairyman's journal; eight years in that most modern of arenas, the information industry. When she abandoned it in 1951, she quoted William James's famous remark that we are in for a new, worse dark ages now that the press supports illiteracy with such an enormous literary organization. But Niedecker went even further, noting how this organization "protects and is protected by that other and still more expensive organization, war. I'd found that a job does not necessarily sustain life."

> I worked the print shop
> right down among 'em
> the folk from whom all poetry flows
> and dreadfully much else.
> ("For Paul")

Niedecker was thus a dropout before the strategy became current in the 1960s, and long before the present decade in which her example must seem all but incomprehensible to her countrymen. Feminine ease? For twelve years she lived without plumbing—among the Americans! And when she finally had to sink a well and install a pump, she wrote, "I've been free/ with/ less and clean."

Free and clean, but wasn't she lonely? I doubt it. We will know more when we see her letters to Cid Corman, due this fall from Duke University Press. According to excerpts published some years ago, she once wrote: "I can't enter into social meetings . . . since I housekeep—plural:houses—and write and read and walk and sew and sing at the top of my voice when folksy records are being played on the phonograph." In a familiar photograph by Jonathan Williams, now on the back of *The Granite Pail*, she has always looked a little cornered. Not the least revelation of *From This Condensery* is the picture, taken by a neighbor, of a candid Niedecker sizing up her country from her vantage point on the Rock River. In time, this new image will overtake the previous one if only—well, the relevant words are in Niedecker's "Thomas Jefferson," drawn from that admirable figure's address to his eldest daughter on the subject of her future happiness:

> To daughter Patsy: Read—
> read Livy
> No person full of work
> was ever hysterical
> Know music, history
> dancing
> (I calculate 14 to 1
> in marriage
> she will draw
> a blockhead)
> Science also
> Patsy

To which there's not much to add, except: read Niedecker, Patsy. □

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Shoah

French intellectuals have belatedly discovered the tragic history of twentieth-century Europe and, in characteristic fashion, proclaimed their discovery to be novel and avant-garde. This long-delayed recognition of the political catastrophes of Stalinism and Nazism (an extraordinary phenomenon; even Sartre did not mention Auschwitz in his 1946 *Anti-Semite and Jew*) can only be explained in terms of the peculiarities of French political culture and the geopo-

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litical reorientation France has undergone in the last decade. No longer the epicenter of a postimperial world, France has turned outward, forsaking the Gaullist insularity and *gauchiste* anticolonialism that constituted its postwar culture. The embrace of the Atlantic alliance abroad, combined with the domestic collapse of Eurocommunism, has brought a new awareness of the past. But this awareness is also accompanied by a profound sense of anxiety about the future of Europe beyond France, especially Poland with its post-Stalinist yoke and West Germany with its dangerous inner core of pacifism.

For the first time, French intellectuals have abandoned the Great Revolution as the taproot of history, and with it the myths of post-1945 French radicalism: antifascist *Résistance* and the revolt of the *Tiers-Monde*. Instead a new and terrifying image of history has emerged: that of the *monde concentrationnaire*, the world of the Gulag and the extermination camp. Foucault's administered universe, the *Nouveaux Philosophes*' "discovery" of Solzhenitsyn and now Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* are linked in this awakening of French intellectuals to the terrors of our epoch.

To see Lanzmann's extraordinary film about the Holocaust in light of current French intellectual preoccupations is not to diminish its achievement but to understand the contemporary power of its central tensions: the Holocaust is implicitly measured against other historical catastrophes. Its theme, in a film that lasts nine and a half hours, is, according to Lanzmann himself, the irreducibility of the Holocaust. Lanzmann's *Shoah* is directed against the political abuse of the Holocaust and its trivialization in such products of mass culture as the 1979 miniseries *Holocaust*. It challenges the Parisian chic of equating Israeli treatment of the Palestinians with the German treatment of the Jews; it challenges the myth of "fascism" as a generic term encompassing everything from the Greek military junta to Heinrich Himmler; and it challenges the no-Holocaust kooks like Robert Faurisson (whom only the French and Noam Chomsky take seriously anyway). Finally, it defies the new prophets of the Gulag like André Glucksmann, who has recently written that antifascism is now a "narcotic," a fatal blindness of the German peace movement to the Soviet threat.

In a 1979 article on his project published in *Les Temps Modernes* (and translated in *Telos*), Lanzmann made his point clearly and forcefully: "Neither discussion nor contestation nor denial is possible; the Nazi crime has no precedent and, at the same time, it is unsurpassable precisely because it is an absolute crime." Lanzmann believes that the Holocaust is a "metaphysical crime committed against the very being of man," but he also believes that it is a historical crime, not a phenomenon of universal evil: "On the contrary we consider the Holocaust to be a completely historical event, the legitimate, albeit monstrous product of the entire history of the Western world." In the apparent contradictions of these statements we see both the great originality of *Shoah* as a historical film, and its central weakness as a film that ultimately avoids history.

In its power to evoke the past, *Shoah* goes far beyond any existing description of the Holocaust either in historical writing or in literature. Lanzmann's single-minded dedication to reconstructing, in fastidious detail, how the killing was managed, administered and undertaken on such a global scale makes the Holocaust seem contemporary. His relentless questioning, his manipulation of hidden cameras and microphones, actually make us see how it all worked—something even the most shocking photographs cannot do. Through the intimate discourse of survivors, the descriptions of German participants and the recollections of Polish witnesses, *Shoah* reveals the logistics of the killing mechanism, the procedures of deportation, the minutiae of destruction and the specificity of the dying in a way that is unprecedented, wholly concrete and not susceptible to concise summary. (This is one reason the book version [Pantheon, $11.95], a transcript of the English subtitles, seems so flat.) Precisely because it never uses old photographs or archive footage, which moor the horror in the safe harbor of the past, *Shoah* permits us to imagine what was never photographed: Treblinka's "Last Road," the undressing rooms at Auschwitz, the scene inside the gas chambers

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or gas vans. Over and over the camera returns to these sites so that we can envision, conjure up images where there are none. As a narrative of the mechanism of annihilation, *Shoah* is without peer.

Lanzmann rejects the view of the Holocaust as a historical aberration, an event beyond the scope of reason. In a sense, reason in the service of death is what made the Holocaust possible: "Twelve years of methodical precision, a slow process of destruction pursued with the knowledge and under the sight of all." This statement explains Lanzmann's almost exclusive attention to the mechanism of destruction, evident from the film's first sequence of the killing center at Chelmno, near the Narew River in Poland, where Jews were first exterminated by gas in December 1941.

Throughout *Shoah* we encounter the metaphor of the machine: the path to the gas chamber at Treblinka is also the called the funnel; "Auschwitz was a factory!" remarks S.S. *Unterscharführer* Franz Suchomel when he compares it to Treblinka, "a primitive but efficient production line of death." As Raoul Hilberg, the only historian interviewed on camera, explains, the "final solution" was the Nazis' "great invention, and that is what made this entire process different from all others that had preceded that event."

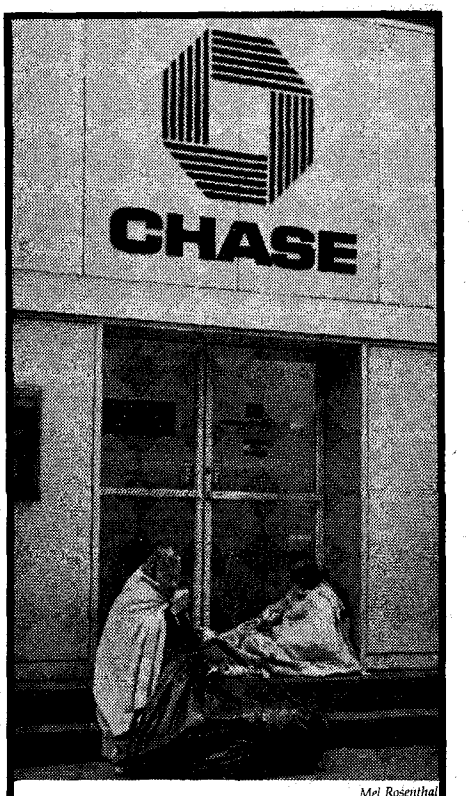
The image that appears most frequently in *Shoah* is also a machine, the railroad, more precisely the freight train, bound by the inalterability of its iron roadbed. In the refrain of the railroad we are meant to see more than the extensive machinery and organized bureaucracy required for administering the deportations and physically and spiritually weakening the victims before their arrival at the killing centers in the East. The trains combine the iron and steel of the second industrial revolution with the wooden carriage of premodern epochs, evoking both the modernity of the killing mechanism and the timeless substance of anti-Semitism—and this double image carries the viewer through the film.

Shoah's juxtaposition of the mechanical character of the killing machine and the age-old reservoir of European anti-Semitism accounts for the much discussed difference between the way *Shoah* treats Germans and the way it treats Poles. *Shoah*'s most original and controversial sequences occur in contemporary Poland, and the Poles are in many ways its real protagonists. *Shoah*'s largely unsympathetic portrait of the Poles is the more disturbing for their having escaped historical condemnation thus far, and speaks volumes about the deep roots of anti-Semitism in Poland, both before and after 1945. Yet, the scandalous attacks on Lanzmann in the official Polish press, and the ensuing furor, have almost obscured the significance of Polish anti-Semitism within *Shoah* itself.

The anti-Semitism of the Poles is primordial, raw and unprocessed, while the Germans filter their reactions through the bureaucratic screen of modern language and precensored speech. The Poles are traditional anti-Semites, unable to conceal their resentments and prejudices, while the Germans are calculating and unrepentant killers hiding behind rational and bureaucratic masks. Apart from demonstrating the persistence of anti-Semitism in contemporary Poland, and apart from documenting the *cordon sanitaire* it provided for the killing, *Shoah* draws a sharp contrast between Poles and Germans and accentuates the primeval character of Christian anti-Semitism by contrast with the technological modernity of the Nazi murder machine.

For this reason, Lanzmann makes no effort to render the humanity of the German murderers. Their humanity, as Primo Levi wrote, is buried "under an offense." Nor does he inquire into their beliefs or motivations. They are simply instruments in a double sense: they are the instruments of death and of the death machine; and they are Lanzmann's instruments, to be used and, if need be, deceived. (This point is also made cinematically by filming the extermination camp personnel from within a spying van and showing the van itself, so that we watch the mechanism of Lanzmann's deception and the mechanism of *their* deception at the same instant.)

By contrast, the Poles, peasants who still farm the fields bordering the extermination camps or who now occupy the homes abandoned by the Jews, are humanized *because* they are still anti-Semites. In contrast to the Germans, who mechanically play out their Ophulsian roles, ostentatiously betraying themselves by their sophisticated evasions, their gestures and their physiognomy, the Poles unabashedly enact their anti-Semitism on camera. They laughingly draw the finger across the neck to replicate the macabre signal they gave to the Jews as the trains passed their fields;



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they explain that Jews smell bad, that Polish men "liked the little Jewesses," that "capital was in the hands of the Jews" or that Jews owned Poland. Even the heroic underground courier of the Polish government-in-exile, Jan Karski, is tainted by his anti-Semitic description of a Bundist leader who led him on a Dantesque tour of the Warsaw Ghetto (Karski liked him "because of his behavior—he looked like a Polish nobleman, a gentleman, with straight, beautiful gestures"). Unlike the Polish "innocents," the Germans are consummate performers who have learned by now that such stereotypical anti-Semitism is impermissible in public. Instead they describe carefully how much or how little they knew—always in light of what they now know, of course.

This distinction between Germans and Poles establishes *Shoah*'s crucial premise of a complicity between archetypal Christian anti-Semitism and the Nazi mass production of death, a thesis that is underscored by Hilberg when he says:

> I would suggest a logical progression, one that came to fruition in what might be called closure, because from the earliest days . . . the missionaries of Christianity had said in effect to the Jews: "You may not live among us". . . . and the Nazis finally decreed: "You may not live."

It is undeniable that millennia of anti-Semitism combined with the technology of mass destruction directed at the extermination of a people for ideological reasons ultimately produced the Holocaust. What is problematic in *Shoah*, however, is that it is Poles, not Germans, who are left to articulate the motives of the German executioners. Yet the anti-Semitism of Polish villagers today, and the ideological anti-Semitism of the Nazi elites, are not of the same magnitude. There is a difference between the anti-Semitism of the Poles, and for that matter most Europeans, and the Nazi ideology of the "final solution." By collapsing contemporary Polish Christian anti-Semitism and the political anti-Semitism of the Nazis, this distinction is blurred, and the Holocaust becomes a direct consequence of epochs of Christian anti-Semitism, the inexorable fate of the European Jews. At the same time, the Nazi "community of blood and nature" is subordinated in the film to the administrative apparatus of destruction.

As a result, *Shoah* exaggerates the role of bureaucratic logic as a motivation for the Germans, just as it understates the fervor of their radical and ideological beliefs. Lanzmann's interview with Dr. Franz Grassler, the deputy to the Nazi commissioner of the Warsaw Ghetto, illustrates how comfortably the cloak of bureaucratic neutrality is worn by former Nazis. But, as an explanation of Nazi behavior—beginning with Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and further developed by Hilberg's work—the "banality of evil" can become a banality of explanation, where rationale and rationalization are impossible to disentangle. The ex post facto postures of former Nazis should not be confused with their motives at the time.

If *Shoah*'s great achievement is its evocation of the Holocaust as an experienced reality, its limitation is that historical understanding is sacrificed to this end. *Shoah* omits the events leading up to the Holocaust—everything from political anti-Semitism to the killing of Jews in the Soviet Union by the *Einsatzgruppen*. The Wannsee Conference of January 1942, at which the extermination process was officially sanctioned, receives only a brief mention. With the exception of sequences devoted to the resistance of Auschwitz-Birkenau (and its paradoxical contribution to the smooth functioning of the killing process) and the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, *Shoah* excludes almost everything that goes beyond the bounds of the killing mechanism.

Lanzmann's decision not to use documentary footage or set events in context is not simply a matter of avoiding the familiar images which might distance us from the horror. Anything suggesting a wider framework is omitted because he does not believe that the Holocaust *can* be explained historically. In 1979 he wrote:

> Until now, all the films dealing with the Holocaust have tried to show its emergence from the oblique course of history and chronology: they start in 1933 with the Nazi rise to power—or even earlier, presenting the diverse currents of German anti-Semitism in the 19th century. . . . The destruction of the European Jews cannot be logically or mathematically deduced from this set of presuppositions. There is a break in continuity, a hiatus, a leap, an abyss between the enabling conditions for the extermination and the fact of the extermination itself. Extermination cannot be deduced from prior causes.

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The Holocaust thus becomes a historical event that is at the same time not a historical event. This is the dilemma of *Shoah*.

In the attempt to prevent the Holocaust from "dissolving in the evanescent distance and in the stereotyped meaningfulness of myth," *Shoah* deliberately creates its own mythical universe: a *monde concentrationnaire*. Its timeless order is based on the chronological development of the extermination techniques, spatially confined to the places of the killing. Lanzmann has acknowledged that "a film devoted to the Holocaust can only be a countermyth, that is, an investigation into a past whose wounds are so fresh and so keenly inscribed in consciousness that they are present in a haunting timelessness." A timelessness affirming that the Holocaust evades historical explanation once again. □

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F	R	Y	I	N	G	P	A	N	■	A	H	E	A	D
Y	■	C	■	U	■	U	■	T	■	R	■	N	■	E
■	T	H	E	P	A	T	H	O	F	D	U	T	Y	■

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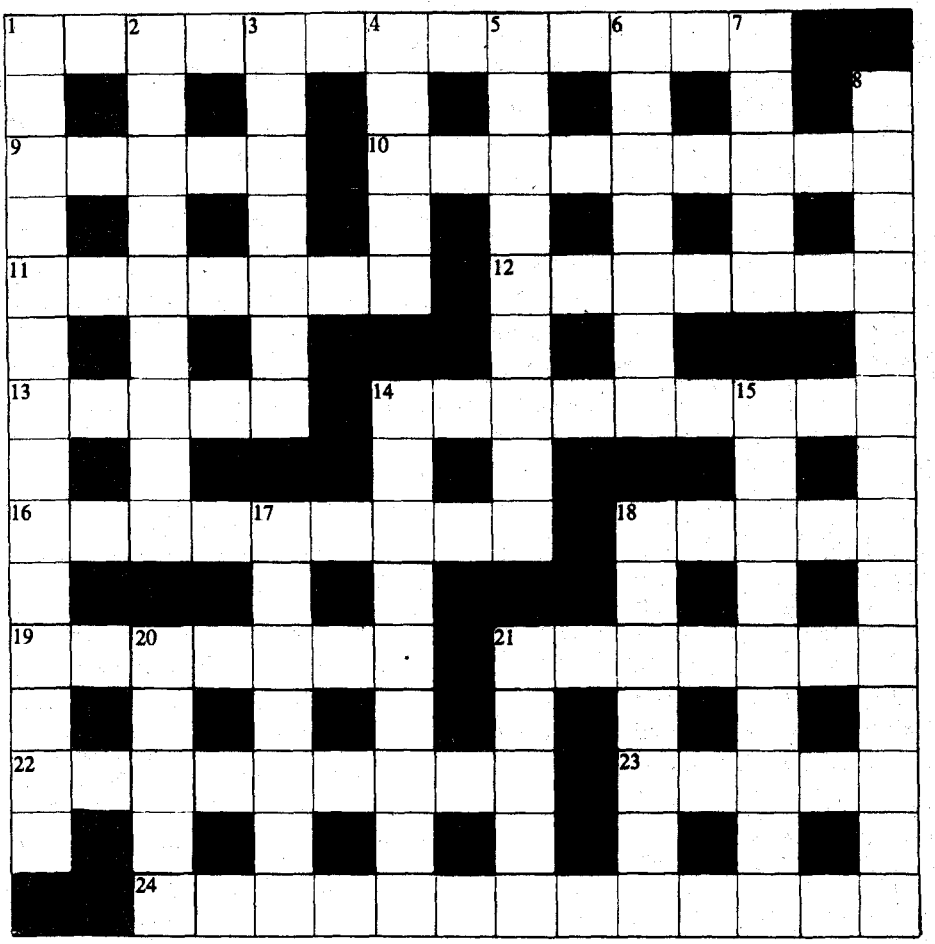
Crossword Puzzle No. 2094

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Just the usual places of learning, but those who are taught there can't, in the canard. (6,7)
9 If so, can't one see the shade? (5)
10 Not necessarily living for a long time—though a possibly big lady in disguise. (9)
11 What some woman wears might depend on it. (7)
12 Chaps in trouble might remind us of the "I say to hell with it!" cartoon. (7)
13 Remained, by the sound of it, proper. (5)
14 One of them might be associated with pride. (9)
16 No beast, it appears, is so stubborn. (9)
18 One is found in a shellfish, as you might assert. (5)
19 The cruel sort points the answer out to be cattlefeed. (7)
21 Here is a gift to introduce! (7)
22 You might find the adoring sort around at one stage. (9)
23 Old spoon, old this. (Plug along with it, possibly.) (5)
24 Towering rage? (2,4,7)

DOWN

1 Duty levied on first-class carriage? (8,6)
2 Sends someone up illegally, certain lines being followed by them. (9)
3 It might be inhuman, but you'll have to make the drain do. . . (7)
4 . . . and 3 is seen more often in the movies in this age. (5)
5 Greets the sound of something cold in the fall—or more likely in another season. (9)
6 Fruit spread around in a very common mineral. (7)
7 A MIG's crashed, while carrying a letter to someone in Athens. (5)
8 Correspondingly, once it has been deposited, you can't get into the subway this way. (2,3,4,5)
14 Departing with a couple of directions enclosed, one might expect a raise because of it. (9)
15 It might result in the drawing of a dull partner, by the sound of it. (9)
17 Are confused in the measurement of what might be close. (2,5)
18 A screed which is crumpled and marked by folding? (7)
20 To identify this animal, you might find a layer of paint on one. (5)
21 One's outlook might be given physical discomfort, by the sound of it. (5)

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PUZZLED?

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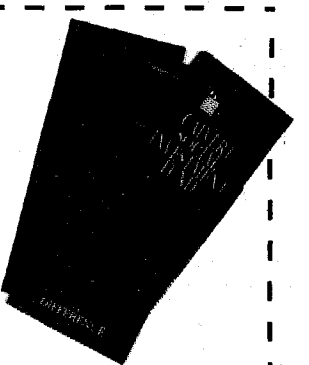

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